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## **THE IDEA OF THE CLASSICAL UNIVERSITY AND THE QUALITY OF MAN**

### **1. Classical university - a general approach**

University (*universitas, studia generalia*, full term: " *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* ("the general body of teachers and students")), the main type of general university of a non-technical character, a higher scientific and educational institution; " the oldest, and also the basic type of European, multi-departmental university; which has the right to confer degrees and which combines teaching functions (training of the most highly qualified personnel and academics) with scientific functions (conducting work)<sup>i</sup>, is perhaps the greatest achievement of European culture and civilization, one of the highest and finest real values it has produced and achievements of high quality; values and achievements, which in the nearly 9-century history of their development, enrichment and modification (the first fully constituted universities were established in the 11th and 12th centuries - in Bologna Paris) gained more and more clearly on their universality, general accessibility and internal autonomy as well as scientific-creative freedom. They surprisingly quickly acquired a global, world character and became – in the better periods of their history – the pinnacle of human achievement. At the same time, they were a symbol of peculiar intellectual sublimity and human standing, dignity and freedom, talent and ability – of both students and professors ("abecedarians" and "masters"); a sign of unfettered scientific creativity and teaching mastery, high non-scientific achievements and cultural advancement, tireless and

"stubborn" pursuit of objective truths and faith-worthy cognitive probabilities, courageous and effective " acquisition of scientific truth and spreading it in word and in print"; and by this – a symbol of truth's "sanctity" and objectivity, full teaching autonomy and independence, reliability and integrity, and at the same time also the spirit of democracy and the rule of law, service to society and all humanity.

In the "proud" and glorious, but also not without deep crises and breakdowns, wrong turns and solutions or practices that were sometimes unsuccessful and contradicting the idea of the classical university, the history of Europe as a whole has developed an ambitious and highly desirable model of the "university person" – both studying and teaching at the university.

As this first "man of the university" or member of the "university community", i.e. the student (in the first European universities, e.g. in the early period of the University of Bologna, fulfilling a primary and dominant role in *universitas* – organization, management, admission of professors, election from their own ranks, rectors and deans, et al.) is concerned, it legitimized its full commitment to study, its "love" of scientific knowledge, its strong desire and unwavering resolve to acquire it as much as possible as well as to acquire it from selected „masters”. Such a student also legitimized personal aptitude and predisposition for "higher study", for active and partnership-based participation in the functioning of the university corporation, solidarity with it and supporting it in a situation of need. Furthermore – he was to demonstrate moral impeccability, but also an uninhibited, spontaneous

participation in the "liberated," joyful and non-conformist student ethos, quite specific student morals as well as various, often surprising and shocking (at least, in the perspective of the bourgeoisie and strict church circles) behavior, which has however generally not gone beyond law and good taste "swagger" or "abecedarian games".

As for the early, i.e., medieval and modern, and then cultivated and enriched in later European universities, including the early twentieth-century type of the so-called "liberal university" (Germany, Great Britain and some other European and non-European countries), the model of the latter "man of the university", the integral subject of the university community, i.e. the profesor or the academic teacher, it situates at the forefront (which is also worth recalling) and considers as inalienable such qualities and qualities as:

1. "service to objective truth", which presupposes not only high intellectual and cognitive abilities, but also appropriate personality and character traits. Kazimierz Twardowski wrote the following about the university teacher in his excellent, although somewhat forgotten speech containing an insightful diagnosis of the universally understood "university reality" entitled "On the eminence of the University": "A university teacher is first and foremost a servant of objective truth, its representative and preacher among young people and society. This service is noble and extremely honorable, but at the same time it requires not only appropriate intellectual qualifications and relevant expertise, but also great fortitude and strong character."<sup>iii</sup>
2. From ourselves, let us add that according to the traditional model of the "man of the university", the academician should be entitled to full

internal and worldview autonomy, as well as unfettered freedom and independence in the conduct of scientific research, in the publication of its results, in academic teaching, i.e. in the conduct of lectures and seminars, in the presentation of its views, professional and social opinions. In this respect, it should enjoy independence both from the administration of its institution and from official state supervision and from the factors financially sponsoring the activities of the university and itself, as well as the ability to publicly, legally and ethically defend freedom of teaching and freedom of research.

Tadeusz Kotarbinski's observations and remarks are also of current relevance: "To entrust teaching to people who know their stuff, and let them teach as they know how, according to their best understanding"<sup>iii</sup>. "(...) "The point", he added, "is to be able to do what one is called to do without hindrance from the outside. One wants to research as reliably as possible and teach as honestly as possible. And this is where friction often arises because of the differences in tasks between the professorship (in the broadest sense) and its supervision (...) friction must be (what's more, it should be), and one just has to make sure that the trajectories of movement not lead to failure, but to great and wonderful, jointly recognized achievements. And after all, science and education directly serve what social oversight indirectly aims at: to make *people smarter and thus govern themselves reasonably*."<sup>iv</sup>

Continuing with the reconstruction of the optimal model of a university teacher, let's state that he should first and foremost be a researcher. And a university researcher, known for his "preeminent mind" should focus primarily on the creation of basic, "purely" theoretical science; science that is cognitively most profound and revealing, creative and creating fertile messages for the totality of human scientific, philosophical, artistic knowledge, and not focus on applied, narrowly practical and *ad hoc* applied science (the latter should be left to polytechnic, medical, agricultural universities, academic vocational schools, or entrusted to industrial laboratories and research labs, various commercial scientific institutes, etc.). Let us add that an authentic university researcher should, as it were and from the initial natural assumption, have the highest possible intellectual and cognitive

predisposition and aptitude, leading, and preferably extraordinary research talent, high, if not the highest, sample of character and personal qualities, optimally disposing him to creative and exploratory activity in the sphere of cognition and theoretical grasp of reality. In turn, taking the matter from the side of everyday existence, this high or top-quality university researcher and academic teacher should have financial independence and obtain full coverage for his research ventures and scientific, teaching and educational initiatives. And, moreover, an academic teacher employed at a university cannot be in any way detached from the society, the nation, the state to which he or she belongs or from the "republic of scholars" with which he or she is formally associated (e.g., through scientific associations, research institutions, the global scientific information system, etc.) or informally belongs (e.g., through an internal sense of belonging and professional solidarity). Moreover - he is burdened with the responsibility to "serve" his own society and the human community as a whole with his own achievements, and sharing them with the so-called "scientific community". On the other hand, however, he should maintain his independence from one or the other political, ideological, religious, business, commercial organizations and movements, etc., which may negatively affect his impartial, objective, independent, "purely" cognitive and not utilitarian, correct research attitude. Probably there is little exaggeration hidden in the still noteworthy statements of the undisputed authority of Polish science and philosophy – Kazimierz Twardowski, already quoted above, when he writes: "Mindful of his lofty mission and trying as hard as possible to cultivate in himself the internal conditions necessary for its fulfillment, the professor and assistant professor of the University will also avoid everything that could arouse an assumption in those around him that objective knowledge is not a guide for him in his life and work, and that could therefore undermine confidence in his scientific impartiality to the utmost (...) one who is indeed, as it is said, a man of science, a scholar in the fullest and most beautiful sense of the word, is capable of being deaf

to the whispers of various ambitions and be able to defend against the temptation to play any role where it does not go at all about truth, but about power, about influence, about dignities, about honor and titles or simply about money ."<sup>v</sup> (sub. m. - J. Sz.).

Let us add that an important and also inalienable attribute of the "man of the university" should be his dignity, consisting in a sense of his own intellectual independence, noble social and cultural mission, special vocation: to create science and academic education, membership in a community of "leading minds" and a respected but not easy professional ethos: to work in an institution of a unique kind and special importance; an institution to which, to a fault among few, such terms as "eminence," "spiritual independence," "love of objective truth," "temple of truth," "temple of knowledge," etc., can be entitled.

However, for many, if not most, academics in modern universities, these terms sound overly exaggerated, highly pretentious, perhaps even naively wishful, utopian and unrealistic, or even foreign, not quite comprehensible and as if from "another era." Let us emphasize here, however, that this does not prove that the sense and meaning of these terms have become fundamentally obsolete in their connection with the "real" university, but only that we have already moved far away - and are still moving away - from the idea of a classical university, i.e., authentic university; about the fact that, for various reasons and reasons, we have probably lost faith in the universal values and particularly momentous functions of this unique, exceptionally well-conceived and programmed, necessary and fruitful - In all historical times - institution from under the sign of *universitas* - in its classical sense - and faith in the values integrally connected with it, such as unfettered creativity, independent learning, objective truth, authentic talent, disinterested love of knowledge, peer education, academic education, ethos of scholars and service to truth, society and humanity.

Thus, the above considerations lead to the question of the contemporary meaning and role of the idea of the classical university.

## **2. The importance of the idea of a classical university**

Formed in the Middle Ages, the classical European university has had a time both of its flourishing and development, success and upsurge, prospects and hope, and a time of stagnation and regression, setbacks and decline, crossroads and anxiety about its future. Examples of the dynamic growth and flourishing of the institution include the University of Bologna and the University of Paris, followed by the University of Padua and the University of Florence from the 13th and 14th centuries, the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge from this and later periods, Charles University in Prague and Jagiellonian University from the 14th and 15th centuries, German universities from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and from the first half of the 20th century (the universities of Halle, Göttingen, Humbolt University in Berlin), some Universities in the United States (from the 17th century. and especially since the mid-19th and largely to this day): Harvard University, Yale University, Princeton University, Columbia University, University of Chicago, University of California. Also included here are some universities of Arab countries, such as Al-Karawijjin University of Fez (Morocco), Al-Azhar University of Cairo, Royal Saudi University of Riyadh, King Abdulaziz University of Jeddah and others. Noteworthy in excess are several high-profile universities from Canada, Japan, Australia, Russia, China, Israel and South America. On the other hand, an example of clear ossification, stagnation and loss of features peculiar to the classical university, e.g., external autonomy, independence in conducting research and teaching, international character, etc., is the state of most European universities in the period starting from the second half of the 16th century and lasting almost until the end of the 18th century, then an example of this state of affairs was the situation of ideological and state restraint of universities in countries with totalitarian regimes in the first half of the 20th century (Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, the USSR, Central European countries).

In general, it can be said that the history of the European classical university is very complex and rich in various problems

functional, organizational and developmental, but against the backdrop of these histories, the idea of the classical university itself exhibits certain universal and timeless aspects<sup>vi</sup>. Therefore, the question of its role and relevance in modern times, and especially its relation to the current and real state of universities in the globalizing postmodern world, is a highly topical and relevant question that is completely open and legitimate. Therefore, let us stop here with it.

Let's start with more general remarks about the modern university, viewing it in its various types and varieties, quality ranks and grades, ongoing transformations and development trends. From such a point of view, first of all, it is possible to say that the state of modern universities, and the extent and degree to which one or other components of the idea of the classical university have been inculcated in them, varies greatly. But in the overall picture, the university is still a subtle and sensitive reflection of the era; a kind of mirror of "the human world" of our times, civilization and culture of the "postmodernity" era, its "glories and shadows", positive and negative sides, main development directions and trends, stagnations and regressions, threats and dangers, hopes and anxieties.

In general, the "university reality" in the leading and developing countries of the modern world "gently" but clearly reflects the social and political relations of these countries, the social and cultural, ethnic and social stratification of the population, the prevailing economic systems, socio-political regimes, the level of economic and scientific and technological development of the country, the material wealth and living deprivations of the main social groups of the countries concerned or even entire geographic regions, and also peculiarly reflects the general state of culture and spirituality (religion, philosophy, art, customs, etc.) of various communities and ethnic groups. In particular, in turn, the state and level of universities of a given country or a particular civilization and cultural circle is a telling, both real and symbolic, testimony to the scientific and technological progress of civilized mankind, the state and dynamics of creative and innovative thought, searching for the invention, higher cognitive and cultural interests, specific attitudes to the

future and human development. It is an expression of respect for knowledge and scientific theories (including scientists and explorers), seeing in them the main factors and subjects of civilizational and cultural progress. In general – it is an eloquent reflection of the level of cognitive culture and creative attitudes of the intellectual elites of certain human communities, their openness to the relevant scientific and technological problems and issues of the time and their commitment, often with genuine research passion and dedication, to their display and solution.

A spectacular, often astonishing and thought-provoking confirmation of the close correlation between the state of universities and the civilizational and cultural advancement of a given country or broader socio-national sphere, is the network of rich university campuses in rich and civilization-leading countries (USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Western European countries); often awe-inspiring with its grandeur, tasteful traditionality and at the same time super-modernity, and sometimes even as if deliberately emphasized, sophisticated architectural and aesthetic splendor and impressive wealth of infrastructure and equipment. On the other hand, lower levels of civilizational development of countries correlates with their modestly equipped and generally underfunded university complexes, not the best looking headquarters and average or low quality of scientific work and teaching activities. This type of university is precisely a telling picture of the general situation of civilizationally and culturally less advanced, poorer, economically "up-and-coming" countries; countries that are less civilizationally and culturally developed. There is something very peculiar about the fact that we see in these countries numerous, often very grand and monumental, churches and other religious buildings and accompanying houses, and not enough university headquarters (with those that exist, generally inherited from the past and rather impoverished). On the other hand, in rich and civilization-leading countries, numerous "old" and "new" campuses and even university cities are proudly presenting themselves – with the full approval and prominent sponsorship of many wealthy citizens and institutions. To put it simply - the universities of poor

and generally not advanced enough civilizationally countries are not scenically beautiful and attention-grabbing objects, while rich and civilization-leading countries display the "brand" of universities impressive in their modernity, grandeur and affluence, and other attractive "to the eye" centers of scientific research and training of highly qualified personnel for effective service of modern information society.

Thus, it is evident that the historical transformation of the university as a leading center of scientific research and higher education, the creation and dissemination of objective and multifaceted knowledge and sometimes the cultivation of authentic wisdom and moral culture provide clear criteria for recognizing and evaluating the main transformations in the intellectual sphere and spirituality of given societies and human individuals, as well as the transformation of many types of attitudes and varieties of subjectivity. For example, generally, the progress or regression in the development of the university in a given cultural and civilizational circle, its quality of "universality", as a rule, indicates the progress or regression of the intellectual culture in general and the spiritual state of almost the entire community of that civilizational and cultural circle. In general - the state and quality of "university-ness" expressively projects on the state of and the quality of "the human world" associated with it". And here it is hard not to agree with Bogdan Suchodolski's statement that, "(...) the key to the future is what is happening and will happen in higher education," including, we should add, what will happen in universities<sup>vii</sup>.

Let's return to the fundamental issues related to the problem of the modern university. Well, one of them – an important one, although not always properly appreciated and sufficiently taken into account by observers and theorists of modernity, is that the university, in its various types and varieties, scientific and educational standards, organizational and administrative structures, material and equipment bases, is not only – what was already mentioned above – sensitive and expressive "mirror" of the state and society in which it functions, and in a sense even the entire era to which it belongs, but – thanks to this

"mirroring" – it is at the same time a sharpened, clear and insightful optic, a "magnifying glass" as it were, an instrument of insight and observation of the closer and more distant reality in which it is located; the social, cultural and civilizational reality. What's more – it is not only about "university optics", the perspective of "seeing", and sometimes also the basis for a better understanding of many important features and transformations taking place in a given era, especially changes in the sphere of intellectual, moral, and living culture of society (mainly its young generations and intellectual elites). Transformations in the sphere of education and cognitive culture are in particular a good cognitive position for recognizing, analyzing, describing and understanding the nature and directions of transformations in the field of higher education and the limits of scientific and philosophical cognition of reality and human self-knowledge that can be reached in a given historical time and a specific civilizational context. University optics also provides, to some extent, the opportunity to learn about – progressively or regressively – transformations in the personal-mental and personal-spiritual dimensions, that is, to some extent, transformations of a psychological and anthropological nature.

In the "university optics" of seeing reality, it is also better and more timely than from other "vantage" and orientation positions, e.g. political or everyday-life, to perceive the most important, although generally hidden and imperceptible for the "non-university eye", trends and directions of development and at the same time various crossroads, threats, current and potential crisis states of the existing "human world".

Thus, for example, a review of the research progress in the laboratories and studios of a dozen of the world's eminent and famous universities (mainly American, Japanese and Western European), in the fields of modern technology, physics, biology, chemistry, medicine, computer science; progress made at an almost geometric rate, or a view of the constructions made on the basis of these discoveries in university and non-university centers of technical, biotechnical and computer engineering, increasingly astonishing in their complex functionality and increasingly

refined practical utility – civilian and military – of various "miracles of technology" and the creative power of modern science, allows us to conclude that man of the present day has reached very high in the sphere of his talents, predispositions and technical achievements; that he has stood almost at the heights of his creative and constructive technical abilities, and – what's more – that he has a real chance of climbing rapidly up this techno-mental ladder even higher, to levels even unimaginable today...., while the fact of the general stagnation – in these universities and research centers – in the humanities and social sciences, not to mention philosophy and metaphysical thought, testifies to this unfortunate circumstance in the (already disturbed for several centuries) uneven development of the human being, namely, that modern man in the sphere of ideas, values and humanistic, pro-human and spiritual activities stops at the "lowlands"; at a relatively low ceiling of development (cf. the continuous increase in brutality, violence, barbarism, hatred, intolerance, homophobia in the modern "human-inhuman world"), and – in general – that it is probably in danger of descending, on this anti-humanist and neo-barbaric path, even lower, to some ultimate bottom; the bottom of the destroyed *humanum*.

Another example. Reduction, often as a result of lack of recruitment of candidates for them, or even liquidation of many faculties of humanities and social sciences education – philosophy, sociology, cultural studies, art history, family sciences (the author of this text knows this from his own experience as a lecturer of philosophy, ethics and cultural theory), provides full justification for the position of the Crisis Committee for the Polish Humanities established in 2015 in our country; a position that convincingly emphasizes the indisputable usefulness of humanists of various specializations in today's increasingly complicated and cognitively confusing world. A position that can be summarized as follows: "The openness and knowledge of humanists is the key to understanding reality and changing it for the better. Humanists adapt better to change because they are flexible, able to

think critically. They are creative, find out-of-the-box solutions, and are not constrained by narrow specialization. Innovative American companies, which employ philosophers can appreciate. A solid humanistic university education should be appreciated , "(...) because it will bring (success), not immediately, but in the long run."<sup>viii</sup> (subc. m. - J. Sz.).

### **3. The modern university - the main roles and tasks**

The modern university in many, if not most, of its concrete national and global embodiments is rapidly losing out on its traditional, classical identity. It is simply becoming a more-or-less modern "high school" or more precisely, a mere modernized and commercialized, highly technologized and computerized and at the same time highly bureaucratized professional trade school. Metaphorically speaking, it loses its, formed in the better periods of its history, genuinely university-like "soul," its specific academic oneness, uniqueness, peculiarity and attractiveness, its unique, elsewhere unheard-of atmosphere, its specific ambience or even festivity, and its peculiar and highly praiseworthy ethos, positively radiating on the surrounding academic community – students and professors. The classical university, the university essential, practically ceases to exist - perhaps only except for its already few enclaves, so to speak, "islands" in the "ocean of non-universitiveness" (non-university higher education) Some even say that it has already *de facto* and definitively "died." Probably, fortunately, there are not yet full grounds for proclaiming the "death of the university", but there is, however, no denying the fact that the university proper, in the strict sense of the word, is rapidly losing, let's hope not irretrievably, "ground under its feet" in the unfavorable scientific-technological, information technology and market-consumption civilization that is accelerating in its development. Which, of course, does not mean that it has ceased to be necessary or even indispensable in this civilization. It simply does not have favorable conditions for dynamic and creative development in it, and perhaps also for its own survival, and in any case

for the time being, there is little chance for free, unfettered and more autonomous functioning.

Classically or properly understood, the university is no longer present in the expanded and "modernized" structure of the modern university. It is missing in fulfilling – as the history of science and education indisputably confirms – its main and inalienable universal function. Namely, to practice pure and disinterested science in terms of its fundamental, basic departments, theoretical and most significant scientific creativity and discovery, and radically bold research explorations and initiatives, with a broad and primary – in accordance with the best tradition of universities – consideration of the humanities, mathematical and logical sciences, and theoretical and natural sciences – combined with university didactics of teaching freedom, research freedom, etc. And in the field of university education and upbringing, what matters is teaching students to think logically correct and as in-depth as possible, independent and critical, creative and inventive, rational and well-reasoned thinking; only in the background, if there appears such a need, teaching professional skills and abilities, practical and professional competencies, expected and desired in the labor market, appropriate qualities and mental and personal qualities, such as creativity, inventiveness, ability to work together in a team, responsibility, subordination, perseverance, etc. The primary functions of the university proper also include more elementary but indispensable tasks, such as, among others, skillfully arousing and appropriately directing the scientific interests of students, stimulating a love of scientific knowledge, rationality and open-mindedness, respect for and full affirmation of higher cognitive, ethical and humanistic values: truth, goodness, beauty, justice, social solidarity, tolerance, human dignity, individual autonomy, individual, cultural, ethnic and social identity, openness to the "other," basic human rights, etc. Among the basic functions of the university is also the education of the young people studying there – mainly by teaching them to "serve the objective truth" uncompromisingly, to stand up courageously and unconditionally for the

for it as one of the highest values, to be guided in life first and foremost by the "reasons of reason" and the common good, the basic reasons of humanity and humanism rather than power, egotistical self-interest, personal career, self-interest and money. In this upbringing, what counts above all is the personal example of the university teacher, his practiced life attitude, and not one or another declaration or persuasion<sup>ix</sup>. Bogdan Suchodolski's main emphasis in university upbringing is that its main goal is: "(...) the development of the most precious values of the human being, (...) the activation of creative abilities, (...) the expansion of the reach of scientific culture (...), the strengthening of the hierarchy of values in which truth stands higher than usefulness"<sup>x</sup> (sub. m. - J. Sz.).

Only through the most complete possible fulfillment of the primary functions defined above is the university able to fulfill its most important "social service", i.e. to conduct effectively and at a high level the training of cadres of well-prepared specialists in various fields of social, scientific, cultural, legal, administrative and local government activity, and – which is the university's primary specialty – to foster a genuine intellectual and social elite of the country and the entire globalizing "human world", necessary for rational, effective and successful "management" of it. This extremely important and momentous role is fulfilled by the university using, to a greater or lesser extent, its autonomy consisting of broad statutory powers of a self-governing nature and academic freedom, i.e. freedom to conduct scientific research and carry out teaching activities. Also important is the degree of independence from the state and from individuals and institutions supporting it financially and in other ways (legal, social, ideological, etc.). And regardless of whether it is a university formulated according to the Kant model (the state intervenes only in certain aspects of the university's activities), the Humbolt model (the state plays a supporting role and does not interfere in the internal affairs of the university), or the British model (the state does not own the university, it only supports it in certain areas of its activities), it seems

that the least favorable for the fulfillment of the university's scientific, educational and universal functions defined above, which are momentous and universal; functions peculiar and to a large extent belonging only to it and in its area possible to successfully, is the so-called Napoleon model (it involves full state control over the university's activities)<sup>xi</sup>.

#### **4. The specifics of university study - the ideal and the reality**

In the centuries-long history of European and non-European universities, the specificity and characteristic peculiarity of university education has been distinctly formed, distinguishing it from the education practiced in other types of colleges – technical, medical, political, theological, etc. Classically conceived university education, that is, study in the proper sense (and not merely teaching, learning, transfer of knowledge and information, training of skills) consisted – and should still consist - of five, integrally related elements, namely: (1) accessibility of studies (their openness), (2) motivation for authentic study (appropriate personal attitudes), (3) mode of study (individual and teacher methodology), (4) organization and structuring of studies (majors, levels of study, plans, programs, fees, etc.), (5) teleology of university study (individual, academic, social, state, general human goals).

Let's turn to a brief discussion of the first three of the components of classical university study listed above.

Let's start with the non-limiting, openness of university studies, i.e., not limiting administratively and economically the accessibility to them for those genuinely interested in them and mentally and personality-wise and appropriately adopted to them; those who want to, above all

satisfy their cognitive interests at the university as well as personal intellectual needs, individual cultural and personal aspirations, develop their creative and intellectual potential, their spirituality and subjectivity, and only secondly, of those who want to properly prepare to fill specific occupations and "specialize" professionally; to find, according to the specialization part of the study, the right place and positioning in the labor market and the chosen field for practical, socially useful activities: for example, legal, managerial, teaching, administrative, political, etc., or creative work (scientific, inventive, artistic, etc.).

This authentically university-like concept of study is, under the conditions of technocratic civilization and the market-based socio-economic system, increasingly restricted, deformed and even "expelled" from many, if not most, university halls and campuses, but it still exists in the minds and intentions of a significant portion of "university people," and especially in the minds and intentions of the still sizable, though unfortunately declining, portion of young people undertaking university studies these days. The diagnosis of this classically university situation announced a dozen years ago by Bogdan Suchodolski – an outstanding pedagogue and humanist, and a great expert and advocate of university; a diagnosis announced many years ago, is still accurate and relevant. Here it is: "(...) In this situation," writes this eminent scholar, "all statistical diagnoses must be treated with distrust in advance: for they will indicate what we have done with these young people, not what they actually are, and especially not what they could be. It must suffice us with the repeatedly observed fact that there are young people who head for higher education because of a keen interest in science. A large part, perhaps the majority, of those who go to study Polish studies or history do not think at all about being teachers in the future; they are simply interested in literature or linguistics, the course of history. Those entering psychology do not "see" their future profession at all; they simply want to study psychology. Mathematics is headed by its lovers and enthusiasts; they think

about it only, and not about the future profession. The same is true in other fields of study, both humanities and natural sciences. Of course, in vocational colleges – as in polytechnics or medical academies – the motives of obtaining a professional diploma prevail, but also in the decisions to choose these universities the motives of 'pure' scientific interests cannot be ignored"<sup>xiii</sup> (subc. m. - J. Sz.).

The classical concept of university studies is a consequence of two basic and perhaps the most important assumptions of the original idea of the university. Firstly, its universality, i.e. its unlimited availability to those interested in study and mentally and personally fully predisposed to it. Secondly, the intrinsic value of studies, and not only their instrumental and utilitarian function, i.e. the assumption that they serve not only – and not primarily – to prepare students for certain professions or predetermined professional roles, and more broadly – to prepare them for usefulness, "productive" and profitable position in social life, but that their primary task is to satisfy and develop the individual cognitive interests of the students, multi-faceted formation of their minds and the skillful enrichment of their personality and subjectivity, intelligence of creativity and education in the spirit of the highest universal values, and in particular in the spirit of true knowledge, the high rank of science, objective truth, the inalienability of social and moral good; generally, that their task is to work for the "quality" of man and modern society.

But this society, too – technocratic and informational – should show a full understanding of the idea of the classical university, its features and characteristics, the peculiarities of "university study"; it should support this idea in its own well-understood interests and, for this main reason, boldly restore it to contemporary educational practice. "This society," writes B. Suchodolski – should no longer accept a situation in which higher education are available only in those extent, which is determined by

personnel needs. Higher education is a good in its own right, which must not be denied to those who would like to possess it, but do not fall within the limits of anticipated national needs. New and important prospects for the country's scientific and cultural development would be associated with such a provision of higher education. When for some it would remain primarily a path to obtaining a professional diploma, for others it would be the realization of talents and scientific interests, and for others it would still be complementary studies to professional education undertaken or completed, and finally for others, it would be studies for personal satisfaction<sup>xiii</sup>.

Thus, it is about such a model of a graduate of the type of studies discussed here, the deficit of which is increasingly being felt, namely, an educated person who will find it expedient to act on the behalf of "modern society": i.e. "... a society of enlightened people, able to participate in steering the destiny of their own country and understanding the requirements of global civilization, able to shape a quality of life opposed to a superficial consumerist existence, linked to creative work and cultural values"<sup>xiv</sup>. However, it remains an open question whether the current systems of higher education, systems that are subjected more and more strongly and almost ruthlessly to the tight and irrevocable requirements of the market and to the technocratic and strictly utilitarian principles of collective life, are capable of preparing such an optimally and multifaceted graduate, or whether, as a result of so-called "objective necessity," they will not limit themselves – as it now often happens – to shaping their students into mostly pragmatic and self-interested types and giving them away diplomas necessary for professional employment and finding a suitable place in the labor market, to the exclusion or relegation of the plans of multi-faceted, general, humanistic and cognitively disinterested, personally creative education. This legitimate and – as it seems – very real doubt is shared by an increasing number of prominent theorists of education and civilization, intellectuals and

philosophers. They include, among others, the previously cited B. Suchodolski, who poses the very topical question: "Are there really in society – and will there be – sufficiently widespread and strong needs to study selflessly, that is, not for receiving a professional diploma, or at least a certificate that would allow advancement in the profession, but the one that would be serve to satisfy personal, non-professional intellectual needs, or one that would be related to the profession in a loose way that would not entail any service-administrative or salary consequences?"<sup>xv</sup>.

The answer to this question is rather negative. Too many and too strong processes and states of affairs of modern technocratic civilization put up a strong resistance to the tendency to restore the idea of the classical university (and with it, the model of university graduate resulting from it) to scientific and educational practice. What's more – a civilization of this type already virtually excludes from its very essence, or at any rate marginalizes the best – and still highly desirable – traditional form of "university-ness – that very peculiar and probably most optimal (out of all the possible ways) way of doing science, upbringing and education. There is something of a great educational paradox here, namely, that the technocratic and information society, under the influence of the forces and necessities to which it is subject – mainly economic and technical – effectively ruins within itself that which is most needed and even necessary to diminish its extremes and one-sided, irrational and destructive tendencies, i.e. deep and creative, multifaceted "enlightened" and far-sighted minds, selfless and pro-human, intentions, open and humanistic attitudes.

### **5. "Soul" of the university**

The modern university – in most of its real varieties – is losing more and more of its traditional classical identity, its original universal "soul", while becoming just a typical "college"; just an educational company with more or less educationally and scientifically profiled scientific and didactic staff, in which efficiency is measured not by the quality of scientific and didactic and educational work, but by the execution of the plan before the "deadline" and the issuance of an adequate number of possibly professionally useful diplomas of graduation confirming "higher education" - "bachelor's", "master's" or "doctoral".

On how market thinking is adversely changing education, we read, among other things, in a column entitled: "A university is not a company" by a well-known columnist and lecturer at the University of Warsaw; a column admittedly reporting only on the current "educational transformation" of just one Polish university, but an account that can almost entirely be applied to almost all universities in our country and, unfortunately, many, too many, universities in that part of the world that has fallen deeply into the snare of the global neoliberal economic and social market system and technocratic civilization. Here are excerpts from the columnist's (scientific, too, could easily be quoted) diagnosis of a singular and exemplary but typical situation nonetheless: "Scientists bitterly joke among themselves that our environment is afflicted by two dangerous diseases: granthosis and punctosis. I would add to them marasmus, conformism and a system of chronic fatigue. We are unable (unwilling?) to oppose the commercialization of science . (...) "The university is not a company" (...). "We don't want to write diplomas on a piecework basis", "I'm not a customer, I'm a student" (...). Somewhere between the successive phases of reform, what made it worthwhile to study and work here evaporated from the university. Attention, focus, time to talk. The heart of the university is not the USOS system, ECTS points and fee schedule, but the exchange of thought. Well, thought is not convertible into points, it cannot be put into parameters. Thought needs time and mutual respect. A good university is such a strange community - seemingly hierarchical, because you know who is a professor, who is a doctor, and who is a student, and yet egalitarian because it is based on dialogue.

That's why the university was sometimes a hotbed of rebellion, a place where protests that led Poland towards democracy began. The university had a soul. However, it seems that the soul of the university is not eternal. It is slowly being killed by the cult of efficiency, the belief that everything can be measured and that studies are preparation of 'human resources' for the job market"<sup>xvi</sup>.

With reference to the above diagnosis and opinion, it is perhaps worth adding a fuller statement: The "soul" of the modern university is effectively killed by a powerful syndrome that is brutally reaching it and self-controlling it in the conditions of the current stage of the market-social-economic system, a syndrome that is decidedly unfavorable, evidently hindering and even blocking the proper functioning of universities, as indeed of all other types of schools and universities, and the full possible "efficiency". It is constituted by ruthless economism and offensive bureaucratism, centralist politicism and over-administration, rigorous economic calculus (profitability, cost-effectiveness, etc.), post-modern technological and digital pedagogical myth. The ever-increasing and more brutal, insufficiently rationalized and curbed offensive of this unfortunate and dangerous to the proper functioning of educational and educational processes of the said, syndrome, means in practice and in general, the application to universities and other schools of a more or less rigorous economic calculus (profitability, cost-effectiveness, etc.); introducing into them an excess of bureaucratic tasks and activities, which are often, from a genuinely educational and scientific point of view, unnecessary and even absurd, however enormously burdening for universities and academics and definitely hindering them from performing their proper tasks and duties. It is also hindering and sometimes even preventing what is one of the basic requirements of good quality and expected effectiveness of the university teaching and education process, i.e. its individualization and interpersonal communication. These decidedly negative and powerful current trends do not support but rather hinder the art of combining valuable university tradition with modernity,

localism with globalism, a kind of educational and creative conservatism tried and tested in the history of education with academic innovation and discovery in the process of university's functioning. They do not allow a practically fruitful principle, which could be metaphorically expressed as follows, to settle in the modern university and other higher education: "What is humanized is not only good and beautiful in school but absolutely desirable"<sup>xvii</sup>.

Summarizing the above general critical remarks about the modern university, formulated mainly on the example of the Polish university of today and the general characteristics of its functioning in the current socio-economic, technological and political conditions, it is perhaps worth emphasizing above all that it is not only "gravitating" very quickly towards the average vocational university, dominated by the paradigm of utilitarian-economic and technical-IT thinking, by the ruthless requirements of the labor market and economic calculation, losing in this "gravitation" the remnants of the features and characteristics that can be associated with the concept of a genuinely university-like, uninhibitedly scientific-creative and educational school; it undergoes numerous and serious deformations and diseases, disturbing and dangerous for the quality of higher education in general; various and negative changes, badly promising expectations about the intellectual level and personal-cultural type of the so-called "educated man" or "intelligentsia" of the present and coming times. These serious (generated in the context of the current socio-economic system) deformations and diseases (it has already been mentioned before) are, for the most part, increasingly clearly perceived and critically assessed and increasingly boldly contested by significant and expanding circles of the academic community. And – of course – they need, where still possible, to be repaired and healed, in the well-informed and deeply understood interests of "university science" and national education in general.

## 6. The actuality of the classical university

And it is in this context of the "university problem" that the idea of the "classical university," that is, the concept of an optimal and authentic traditional university – with its characteristic structural and functional model (it was mentioned earlier) – claims its possible and rightful place in modern education. Paradoxically, a university of this type, especially the most and characteristic components of it, obtains perhaps in the present day – despite the various obstacles and difficulties and even, as it seems, impassable barriers piling up in front of it – more on its actuality and inalienability. It pretends, as a unique and inimitable organization of scientific creativity and high-level education, to the rank of an institution of high, if not the highest, "utility" public, social and individual, cultural and all-human. Despite all sorts of limitations, distortions, destructive influences, erroneous organizational and programmatic solutions and principles of management and operation of universities, the goals and tasks set for them; imposed and enforced by the scientific-technical, information technology and market-consumption civilization, in most of the current, far-distorted and deformed forms of universities, the initial, "original", classical idea of this institution (university) does not lose within this civilization, and especially in it, its momentousness and attractiveness, "dignity" and unique "singularity." What's more – the conviction increases and spreads in academic circles (teachers and students) of the need, even the imperative necessity of the actual reactivation of this idea within educational systems of this civilization. This idea is once again beginning to be associated with growing hopes and expectations for at least a partial solution in the near and distant future of the swollen educational problems of the extremely and unilaterally economizing and technocratizing "human world" of the "postmodernity" era, especially in terms of educating the increasingly missing cadres that would be multi-faceted intellectually, culturally and

in terms of personality; cadres necessary for the proper management and steering of this increasingly complicated and threatened world. And since this idea – how necessary or even, to some extent, salutary in this world – encounters enormous (and perhaps insurmountable) resistances and barriers, difficulties and obfuscations on the way to its possible (even partially, but at present still probably possible) realization, and thus becoming a desired "university reality", it can be considered one of the highest challenges and postulates of modernity. This challenge is articulated in the radical currents of contemporary social and pedagogical thought (e.g. among others, in integral, humanistic and cultural pedagogy) and practically, for the time being, in various – tacit or publicly loudly expressed – "humanistic" statements and protests in defense of the proper functioning of universities and other higher education institutions that would not be distorted by the pressure of the economic market and bureaucratic-technocratic systems and where philosophy and humanities would not be expunged from. And in these socially expanding planes of expressing and manifesting of this (to some extent already dramatic) idea and undertaking the overly serious educational "enlightenment" challenge dictated by it, something of paramount importance is at stake, i.e., the maintenance and development – "despite everything" – high quality of man as a *human* being; full and integral humanity, undegraded *humanum*, and thus the survival of the human species in good mental and spiritual condition.

To conclude these considerations, let us reiterate the basic statements, starting with the obvious observation, namely that the model of authentic university study should be fundamentally different from the organizational and programmatic shape of higher professional education. The bulk of the content of teaching in it should contain the original teaching plans of independent academic teachers with a large and significant academic record and with a distinguished talent and experience in teaching.

The vast majority of lectures, conservatories, seminars and scientific consultations should be conducted by the so-called "independent" academic teachers, professors, post-doctoral fellows, and not by persons performing auxiliary roles in the scientific and didactic process of the university: assistants, lab assistants, assistant professors, etc., which, however, is a common practice in most Polish universities today. And the concerning general strategy of teaching, its starting point should be not only and not so much the transmission of "finished" (achieved at a given time) results of individual sciences, but to show current research processes in these sciences and – as far as possible performed together by those who learn and those who teach – "participation in developing sciences", co-creation of "love of science", satisfaction of personal intellectual needs and interests, individual cultural aspirations and ambitions, subjective and personal cognitive predispositions and potentials, proper differentiated talents and aptitudes, etc. And guiding motivations to this type of ("truly" university-like) study should be not so much the so-called "earning" (which today is also dominant in the so-called "making scientific careers") successive academic degrees and academic service promotions, but one's own intellectual, personal-creative, cultural, social and moral development, and as a consequence – the best possible preparation for the fulfillment of competent and skillful, effective performance of selected professional, state, local government or international roles and functions (the deficit of cadres appropriate to the increasingly complex and confounding social, political and international reality is increasingly apparent and highly worrisome).

One of the tried ways, methods and opportunities "preparing" these cadres at an appropriate intellectual, cultural and fitness level for the proper and effective fulfillment of leading public and social roles – roles that are increasingly difficult and that place ever-increasing and complicating demands on their adepts – are (or rather could be) appropriate "university studies", which should be clearly distinguished from the

polytechnic, medical, information technology, law, pedagogical and other higher professional studies; studies fundamentally differently programmed and conducted from those. It may be worthwhile here to quote again the opinion on this overly important and topical issue of an undisputed expert on the subject. He writes: "(...) meeting staffing needs is an important thing, but the love of learning is extremely valuable in modern society. Therefore, everything should be done to expand, strengthen and develop it, not dumb it down. Even if this were to happen – allegedly – at the expense of professional preparation. However, one may think that there really is no such cost. For we do not have today the ability to accurately determine the "professional qualifications" that will be needed at the turn of our century and the next; we cannot determine many professions that will be created in the future. In determining the canon of professional education today, we operate on past experience, and we should know that it may prove limited or even useless. Under these conditions, studying science, inspired by a love for it and participating in its development, may be a more effective strategy in the long run than passing the exams that make up a professional diploma. If the course of study in higher education, especially in some colleges, constructed today as a process of learning a conglomerate of knowledge needed for future professional work, were transformed into a course of study participating in the development of the scientific discipline chosen by the student, in accordance with his or her cognitive passion, we would have a real revolution. In fact, it has already been heralded for some time in some fields of study, but it remains still too little radical and too timid. And yet it is about a thing socially and individually of the greatest importance: the development of the most valuable qualities of the human being, the activation of creative talents, the expansion of the reach of scientific culture, the strengthening of the hierarchy of values in which truth stands higher than usefulness"<sup>xviii</sup>.

One of the conclusive factors in the success of university training of these types of cadres and preparing them for effective performance of "high services" of society and the public is

the type and scope of the subject of this education and "adoption." In the most general terms, it is about the multifaceted and post-professional nature of this subject, its broad scientific and axiological horizon: humanistic and natural, social and ethical, anthropological and philosophical; about going beyond the framework of narrowly defined scientific specializations and professional skills, practical and an *ad hoc* practical competence.

In other words, any course of study that is genuinely university-based should be firmly "encapsulated" with a wide range of basic sciences, both humanities and natural sciences, such as: sociology, psychology, cultural studies, theory of civilization, educational theory, economics, political science, ethics, etc. from the social sciences and humanities, as well as - and to a considerable extent - philosophy, with particular emphasis on social philosophy and philosophical anthropology; and from the natural sciences and technical sciences, such as, for example, physics, biology, computer science, theory of technology, ecology, etc., as well as the natural sciences. This entire "block" of basic sciences (more precisely – selected elements of them), appropriately structured, harmoniously interconnected and skillfully didactically implemented (by lecturers personally practicing at least one of these basic sciences and didactically gifted) should be an integral and obligatory segment of the entire subject of university studies for all students – regardless of one or another of their specialized fields of study. It could be, as in early universities, the so-called "liberal sciences" (*atrium*) as the first, compulsory level of these studies, or it could be a stream of studies parallel to the so-called specialized subjects, complementary and preparatory in relation to them. In any case, it should be the foundation, the starting ground and indispensable basic support of modern university study. Without it, this study, as the contemporary practice of most universities proves, is not full and complete, and thus does not lead to the educational results expected today; it does not give university education in the full sense of the word, does not prepare cadres that would be thoroughly and comprehensively

educated; cadres whose shortage is acutely and anxiously perceived by intellectual and humanistic circles concerned about the future fate and security of the "human world." If the classical university is not reborn, or if its essential components are not brought to life – in spite of the narrow-minded and short-sighted (but now all-powerful economism of thought and action), in spite of the "rationalism" of profit and profitability, extreme pragmatism and consumerism in life, total technicism and technocratism, it will mean without a doubt that modern culture and civilization have not gained the confidence to rebuild an institution that could play an important, if not the most important, role in the healing and renewal of this culture and civilization, and even perhaps - in their survival.

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<sup>i</sup> *University* (in:) *Wielka encyklopedia PWN*, vol. 28, Warsaw 2005, p. 311.

<sup>ii</sup> Kazimierz Twardowski: *O dostojęństwie Uniwersytetu*, Poznań, University of Poznań MCMXXXIII, p. 10.

<sup>iii</sup> Tadeusz Kotarbinski: *Ways of Self-Inquiry. W centną rocznicę urodzin*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warsaw, p. 159.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>v</sup> Kazimierz Twardowski: *On the eminence of the University*, cited edition, pp. 10, 11.

<sup>vi</sup> Cf. G. Labuda: *Rola i zadania uniwersytetów w nowoczesnej organizacji nauki*, Poznań 1962; H.L. Jilek: *Historical Compendium of European Universities*, Geneva 1984; W. Kryszewski: *Uniwersytet* (in:) *Wielka Encyklopedia PWN*, t.28, Warsaw 2005, pp. 311-322; D. Antonowicz: *University of the Future. Challenges and policy models*, Warsaw 2005; *University*. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University>; K. Denek: *University in the perspective of the knowledge society, Science and education in the University of the XXI century*, WSPiA, Poznań 2011.

<sup>vii</sup> Bogdan Suchodolski: *Open University*, (in:) *Wychowanie mimo wszystko*, Wydawnictwo Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warsaw 1990, p. 370.

<sup>viii</sup> *Philologist: A philologist without a chance*, High Heels , April 11, 2015, s. 7

<sup>ix</sup> Cf. Kazimierz Twardowski: *On the Dignity of the University*, cited ed.

<sup>x</sup> Bogdan Suchodolski: *The Open University*, cited edition, p. 368.

<sup>xi</sup> Cf. *University*. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, source cited, p. 228.

<sup>xii</sup> Bogdan Suchodolski: *The Open University*, cited edition, p. 367.

<sup>xiii</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 370.

<sup>xiv</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 365.

<sup>xv</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 366.

<sup>xvi</sup> Agnieszka Graff: *A university is not a company*, "High Heels," May 30, 2015, p. 6.

<sup>xvii</sup> Cf. Jan Szmyd: *School and pedagogical thought in "postmodernity" - civilizational and social contexts. Outline of the issue*. (In:) *Towards a good school centered on students*, academic editors Jozef Kuzma, Jolanta Palka, Volume I, AFM Publishing House, Krakow 2014, pp. 68-82.

<sup>xviii</sup> Bogdan Suchodolski: *The Open University*, cited edition, p. 368.