
MELANCHOLY AND POWER, KNOWLEDGE AND PROPAGANDA: DISCUSSING THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH IN EUROPE

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You can be the captain
I will draw the chart
Sailing into destiny
Closer to the heart

G. Lee, A. Lifeson, N. Peart *Closer to the Heart*

In the context of the much discussed exponential growth in knowledge it should come as no surprise that the amount of paper spent on books, articles and reports devoted to the calling of an intellectual and related struggles, troubles as well as modest pleasures and rewards is also growing. I have not studied and therefore cannot confirm if the growth in that segment of knowledge production is exactly exponential, or does the function follow any

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other mathematical form. For the purposes of the current paper this bears no particular importance. It would be fully sufficient if the parties agree that quite a significant number of such writings have been recently brought to the light of day and that there is no good reason to expect the production to diminish in foreseeable future. Current regime of knowledge production carries enough stimulating force to assure that each of the workers produces one's fair amount of text each day, not only getting it printed to avoid perishing, but also patents as many of one's ideas as possible (OLSEN, 2005).

What may sound trivial, though goes often unnoticed is the fact that writings on intellectual life and calling are always autobiographical. People who write those books and papers are without exception intellectuals. They are so by the very definition. A rather significant corollary of the latter is that despite what the authors of these reports may say or wish to present as objectively true regarding the intellectual conditions of our or any other era, or the contributions the intellectuals make or do not make, it should always be taken with a grain of salt. So when John Searle for example declares that the university constitutes «an aristocracy of trained intellect» (SEARLE, 1975: 88), this statement carries in a way a lot more and also much less than a statement of an empirically established truth. The same applies to individuals who talk about the age of supercomplexity - a concept that ironically enough can impress but a relatively simple mind, or to those who lament for the loss of something that has never existed, for example Humboldtian research university (see e.g. Ash 1999). In each such case does the author convey a message about himself, which the relatively unlearned audience is expected to record for the sake of future generations. If there is anything one can call *la trahison des clercs* almost eighty years after Julien Benda wrote his jeremiad against the treason committed by the intellectuals back in 1928 (BENDA, 1958), this is the shameless self-promotion looming large among the half-learned half-intellectuals, who no longer have the patience to wait until the community of scholars recognizes their contributions before they start crafting biographical sketches for themselves, to witness to their status as *world authorities* in a field or another. A paper or a book written, a talk or an interview given is expected to create immediate reputation that translates directly into personal fortune and fame, and funds raised for one's ever so hungry university.

More often than never such works do not only romanticize the intellectual calling, but also present the relatively narrow interests of the cognitive workers as coinciding with those of the society in general, calling the latter for further sacrifices in the name of serving the higher values of humanity. Obviously, these are the intellectuals who for the most of the time know what is good for the humanity. There is, there can be no doubt that what is good for the intellectuals and the organizational structure that covers them, i.e. university, is good for everybody. Therefore one should be somewhat cautious reading what the intellectuals say about themselves, as such statements do not always come well-balanced. Critique of the critics is often missing, or if it exists, it represents such a level of anti-intellectualism that it cannot be taken seriously. Here lies the threat that public in general remains always vulnerable to manipulations by its intellectual elite and anybody who is in a position to criticize it by this very fact has already joined the same interest group. Trying to expose the ambiguity of the knowledge workers' position in the knowledge society, where their political interests could be taken, or even presented for the knowledge produced, one should be aware of two other positions. The first of them was presented in Vladimir Lenin's letter to Maxim Gorky back in 1919:

«The intellectual forces of the workers and peasants are growing stronger and getting stronger in their fight to overthrow the bourgeoisie and their accomplices, the intellectuals the lackeys of capital, who consider themselves the brains of the nation. In fact they are not its brains but its shit» (LENIN, 1919/1997: 229).

While I am trying to argue that in a society where knowledge has become one of the most important commodities the position of the knowledge producers is gaining increasing sensitivity and possibly prone to compromises, I am by no means suggesting, like Lenin and his followers in the post-structuralist camp have been doing, that one should necessarily become paranoid about tracing political interests in everything said and written. What I am, however, saying is that political interest is often being presented for empirical truth and with the growing trust of the public in science, the boarder between the politics and science is being blurred, with the political discourse being presented as scientific. As regards the latter, we

should be more critical on what science can and cannot deliver and acknowledge that the political discourse as such has the right to exist next to scientific and philosophical discourses, each of them being called by its own name. Underneath the declared progress of science a very different thing may be happening. With the science becoming in the eyes of the masses, to whom - to paraphrase Marx - it serves but as yet another kind of *opiate*, the main legitimating force of politics, it is not that politics is being effectively scientificized but the opposite - 'politics [is] co-opting the language of science' (HELLSTRÖM and JACOB, 2000).

Another position, which we should consider carefully, comes from an Oxford philosopher William H. Newton-Smith. While for him a clear difference between science and politics exists, he seems to allow surprisingly broad range of acceptable behaviour to individuals in areas where intellectual integrity does not serve the *epistemic ends*:

«One is just not supposed to tear out those pages of one's laboratory notebook that go against the hypothesis one has advanced in print. Clearly this norm serves the epistemic ends in science. And it highlights a contrast with other institutions such as politics and diplomacy. In the case of these institutions the suppression of data is often seen as a positive virtue» (NEWTON-SMITH, 2000: 345).

In my view, for an individual speaking from the position of an intellectual, assuming such a fundamentally relativistic position with regard to intellectual integrity of any professional activity would be impossible. If we understand the intellectual as Shils (1969) does, clearly we have a problem with such relativity:

«In every society however, there are some persons with an unusual sensitivity to sacred, an uncommon reflectiveness about the nature of their universe, and the rules which govern their society. There is in every society a minority of persons who, more than ordinary run of their fellow-men, are enquiring, and desirous of being in frequent communion with symbols which are more general than the immediate concrete situations of everyday life, and remote in their reference in both time and space. This interior need to penetrate beyond the screen of immediate concrete experience marks the existence of the intellectuals in every society» (SHILS, 1969: 25-26).

While an intellectual can establish and analyze ethical corruption in any professional field, including diplomacy, it is hard to see how a person of *unusual sensitivity to sacred* would find it possible to justify this. Within the limits established here, the only possible consistent conclusion is that an individual presenting such a position is morally corrupt. Such conclusion would suggest that no everybody presenting him- or herself as an intellectual at a closer look lives up to the standards of such calling, meaning that not every scribe and teaching assistant, or even professor, necessarily qualifies as an intellectual. While Edward Said draws a line based on a similar argument between amateur intellectuals and professionals:

«For example, the difference I drew earlier between a professional and an amateur intellectual rests precisely on this, that the professional claims detachment on the basis of a profession and pretends to objectivity, whereas the amateur is moved neither by rewards nor by fulfilment of an immediate career plan but by a committed engagement with ideas and values in the public sphere» (SAID, 1996: 109);

in my view it is also fully obvious that under the current regime of mass production of knowledge, producing knowledge has become an assembly line work as an opposite to the earlier performing of an aristocratic calling.

I. INTELLECTUALS AND KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

There is every good reason to raise such an argument. It would be actually hard to assume how the mass university and research and development sector could be filled with exceptional individuals of *unusual sensitivity to sacred*. Whichever the personality characteristics and dispositions these individuals carry may be, they should be rather usual if for no other reason than because of the sheer size of the sectors. Most of the individuals involved in mass education and research are by definition not unusual but usual. They are involved in routine work under routine conditions and should for all good reasons be considered as knowledge workers, representatives of a mass production profession. It would be entirely futile to try to describe these individuals as exceptional for their moral qualities and there is certainly no reason to romanticize their jobs more than any other (TOMUSK, 2003).

The fate of the intellectuals, particularly during the second half of the twentieth century is tragic. First, the rapidly expanding universities absorbed most of the intellectually inclined, and then transformed them into workers in the knowledge-production industry, thus actually decimating the class of independent intellectuals (JACOBY, 1987/2000). Many of the cognitive activities carried on in higher education and research sectors no longer qualify as genuinely intellectual. A science aristocrat engaging in routine laboratory experimenting would certainly not qualify, as would a philosophy professor from whom Anthony Blair, the Prime Minister of the kingdom no longer as great and as united as it once used to be, seems to have taken his lessons arguing for the war in Iraq before the British parliament. On the other hand, a *samizdat* author in the Soviet Union, to whom only the lowest level of manual employment was available, would qualify as one, perhaps the only type of intellectual under the Soviet regime. For us, moving and regulating knowledge like money, as Bernstein (1996) suggests, is of no particular intellectual value. Indeed, when Bernstein argues that under the current regime of truly secular concept of knowledge *is money* and divorced from people, their commitments and their personal dedication (BERNSTEIN, 2000: 86); the knowledge of an intellectual is necessarily related to people, *their commitments and their personal dedications*.

One may suggest that being an intellectual is more than a job, a function an individual performs for a certain number of hours each week for pre-determined remuneration; being an intellectual means playing a *role* in the *Theatrum Mundi*:

«The character, a person in the theatre of the world, is totally involved in his role. He relies on his intimate intuitions and feelings much more than he would in fulfilling a function. He counts neither his time nor his effort. He mobilises all his faculties. The function brings to mind a kind of work that produces a reliable result, is measurable and verifiable. But the role suggests a vigilant presence, aiming for an end described in terms of well-being or happiness, which is to say that it cannot be measured» (DELSOL 2003: 141-142; my italics V.T.).

It should come as of little surprise that, as the economy has become war by *other means*, to paraphrase von Clausewitz, everyone is expected to become a foot-soldier in the global economic war, with university acting as

the military academy. Delsol offers a sobering explanation on how the global economic regime transforms societies into massive armies:

«Functions require interchangeable actors with equal levels of required competency. A typical example is the army, in which by definition the players must be instantly replaceable; they must therefore become indistinguishable from their functions, whence the anonymity of uniforms and the use of rank for identification. In similar but less obvious ways a hospital requires a radiologist, a university requires a medieval specialist, and a business needs a sales manager» (ibid, p. 142).

In such a world we no longer ask 'What is true?' and 'What is good?' but instead 'How can we live better?' or 'How to stay alive?'. Obviously, 'living better' may mean different things to different people, and having broadband access to the Internet is not exactly what the world's most needy people dream of, although we view it as a universal blessing on the assumption that what makes Mr. Gates richer should be good for everybody.

Another force corroding the institution of the intellect is the expected immediate practicality and applicability of its outcomes. Here, the achievement record of social research appears rather disappointing. Immanuel Wallerstein laments loudly:

«The fact is that, after 150 years of an amazing amount of work, world social science has much too little to show for itself and is unable to perform the social task that outsiders demand of it - providing wise counsel about how to solve what are considered to be the 'problems' of the present» (WALLERSTEIN 2004: 176).

He is perhaps right in arguing that the lists of social problems social scientists have solved over the past century and a half remain unimpressive. But again, returning to Shils' definition, we should first acknowledge that societies need certain number of intellectuals even if they do not produce any solution to any problems, but only apply their intellectual faculties endlessly complaining about everything all the time, suffering themselves most because of the imperfectability of our miserable human condition. Lepenies explains:

«We saw that labour was a means of counteracting the bourgeois melancholy that developed after the economic emancipation of the

bourgeoisie. It permitted the space of introversion to be left to those who could not or would not become economically active, namely the free-floating intelligentsia» (LEPENIES, 1992:180).

Following from this, forcing intellectuals to become economically productive would actually be a rather perverse thing to do. It would violate their fundamental identity of being unproductive by definition. If cornered, intellectuals, as Lepenies also indicates, would be able to produce something, though one cannot be sure if this is exactly what we need:

«Utopia emerges from melancholy with the world and from the world's inadequacy and ends with the impossibility of reflection, the prohibition of melancholy, and the redeeming promise of a stable happiness within a manageable space» (LEPENIES, 1992, p. 148).

Prophet Jeremiah, one of the first recorded intellectuals, summarizes the essence of his calling not worse than any of the twentieth century sociologists:

«From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. But the prophet who prophesies peace will only be recognized as one truly sent by the Lord if his prediction comes true» (JER. 28:8-9).

With the expansion of higher education and social research in particular, availability of funding forces formerly critical social scientists to policy research and development. The outcomes of that, as Michael Young (YOUNG, 2004) demonstrates in the case of South African educational policy, do not look promising either. The uncompromising position of the intellectual is good neither for policy development nor politics. Engaging in those areas puts the integrity of intellectuals at risk. Policies are always to be negotiated on the political grounds; however, truth politically negotiated cannot be seen as truth by anybody but most ardent Marxists-Leninists and a handful of post-modern theoreticians. Not to add that one sees an academic *negotiating* his theory before the university senate. While in his time, Karl Mannheim, perhaps mistakenly so, thought it possible to combine intellectual responsibilities, science and politics (see e.g. Mannheim 1936/1968), on this point I would rather agree with Barzun (1959/2002) who, while arguing

for the intellectual freedom of intellectuals, also understands that the house of intellect has its limits, both regarding the tasks it can undertake without compromising its identity, as well as its sheer size. An intellectual is, after all, a dangerous creature: «The servant of truth seems always ready to kill: the mild scholar lives to destroy his colleague with a theory, and this fratricide is his duty and title to fame» (BARZUN, 1959/2002: 176).

Not a good disposition for writing, let us say, a policy paper. While explaining how eccentric intellectuals lured into the contemporary university fail as intellectuals, as well as cognitive workers, Wallerstein also argues that the social sciences lack the tools, and above all the language that would allow them to deliver the promise of resolving problems. The problems identified and the language used to resolve them originate from the same liberal worldview, meaning that the solutions are in the language of the problems. That may well mean that no amount of additional *research* would break the verbal circle. As already mentioned above, the very language of such problem-solving is irrelevant to the life experience of those who have not been endowed with university-produced knowledge. This unfortunately shows at least the social scientists in the contemporary university in a somewhat unfavourable light: as problem-solvers they face the threat of being irrelevant, as intellectuals - corrupt.

Those who demand hard social relevance from social sciences may follow a fundamentally wrong path. Theory is always detached from the practice on both sides - for its development based on empirical evidence derived from the practical experience as well as for its impact on human action. As for the former, philosophers well know that a number of extra-empirical principles of selecting and organizing the data enter every theory. As for the latter, we also know that human beings are not particularly good at acting according to their own preferred theories or consistent following their philosophical and moral convictions. The only way out I am able to see would be to argue that critical and theoretical social reflection has its rightful place among all other types of human activity independently of its immediate practicality, which, however, does not necessarily mean that the sector, being lead by false expectations, has not grown excessively large over the past half a century.

II. HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH

Higher education research would make an interesting, although not entirely uncontroversial example demonstrating the predicament in contemporary social science. While being perhaps not entirely conclusive, looking at our own colleagues' toiling on the boarder of melancholy and power, knowledge and propaganda would perhaps shed some light on the intellectual commitment and practical value of the works in our own camp of labour. Teichler's recent paper (TEICHLER, 2003) echoes some of the issues rose by Wallerstein and indicates the relevance of his arguments in the context of higher education research. According to Teichler, higher education research has been a growing field over recent decades, and those involved in it act concurrently as consultants, institutional researchers and administrators (ibid, p. 178). It is not, however, entirely obvious what the latter precisely means. Could it be about the growing attractiveness of higher education researchers for many jobs in the city of intellect or the knowledge factory, including the administrative responsibilities instead of, as it was until recently, simply occupying academic positions in sociology, political science and economics departments, as Teichler seems to be assuming; or do we actually see a reverse causal connection—representatives of a growing number of previously non-academic professional categories claiming academic status, if not a robe of an intellectual, in an attempt to elevate their professional standing by developing publication records and lists of conference talks for their Curriculum Vitae? This, as we well know, is often the case with provosts of the College-on-the-Hill (DeLillo 1984) and alike presenting their old war stories, or a deputy Minister of Education of a semi-autocratic, half-failed post-communist state presenting the daydreams of his Minister for the latest innovations in the field. In days when the available page-space in quasi-academic journals significantly exceeds the offer of papers meeting acceptable quality standards, there is a significant chance for such a production to reincarnate on the pages of journals, which I would rather not name here. Be that as it may, the result is not exactly satisfying:

«Most analyses emerging are so strongly shaped by the high expectations that they are somewhat blind to the possible 'mixed performance' which tends to show up in the implementation process of reforms» (TEICHLER, 2003: 178).

By using unusual adjectives as *somewhat blind*, Professor Teichler seems to be suggesting, albeit politely, that learned colleagues have often failed to acknowledge that their research has drifted away from the reality, being no longer, if it ever was, in a position to inform the reforms of once-again mixed or no outcomes. As Wallerstein (2004) argues, this failure has deep epistemological roots. The conceptual apparatus applied has a high expectation built into it, so that failure becomes inexpressible. One could also make an argument for newly born administrator-researchers being neither fully competent researchers nor fully responsible intellectuals. Finally, it cannot be ruled out that manufacturing high expectations is the very goal of much of social science research, a direct expression of the interests of the scientists themselves as well as those of the paymasters. Systematically cultivated high expectations keep the funding streams alive and politicians whose programs receive *scientific* legitimisation satisfied. Unfortunately, such research fails to see beyond itself being merely, as Teichler suggests, *l'art pour l'art*. Perhaps not the aesthetically most satisfying art one could possibly find.

One recent, rather high-calibre attempt that could be seen in terms of pushing public expectations for the practical outcomes of science to its very limits is the discussion on the so-called Mode1-Mode2 transition (GIBBONS *et al.*, 1994). On the opposite side, Fuller (2000) refuses to accept that drawing such a distinction as Gibbons and colleagues argue for is historically justified, suggesting instead that the two modes have both been there challenging and enforcing each other for as long as man has been consciously reflecting on his environment. While disciplines obviously change, expectations for the Mode 1 to disappear are as little justified as the arguments that Mode 2 represents any particular historical novelty. Kivinen and Ahola give a relevant hint on the source of the multiple identity of higher education researchers and their interests, the functionaries of various breeds who have been able to obtain, amongst other things, the researcher's hat using science to create comfortable niches in the chain of knowledge production: «High-powered executive and political experts—often backed up by statutory privileges—create needs which they alone have the authority to fulfil» (KIVINEN, AHOLA, 1999).

A multiple identity as described by Teichler allows generating a need for certain kinds of knowledge, supposedly applied and closely policy-relevant.

Whatever the benefits of such knowledge may be, it cannot be ignored that this is the knowledge the above-mentioned functionaries are in a position to produce, in contrast, for example, with theoretical and conceptual work that would require more solid preparation, or critical discourses that might not necessarily yield cash flow. Policy research to manufacture a discourse of permanent progress is, however, a safe genre both in social sciences in general, as well as in higher education research. Still, as Wallerstein (2004) argues, in its functions of interpreting and affecting social reality social science is an arena of social struggle. In a knowledge society this struggle may be easily merged with other struggles, for example with the one waged by those occupying increasingly insecure positions between the science aristocracy and knowledge workers (TOMUSK, 2003). There is no strictly value-free research; the question concerns the nature of particular values at play. In the contemporary university it is often survival that is at stake, and its value cannot be underestimated.

III. PRODUCTION OF BOLOGNA KNOWLEDGE

Public man who once walked the streets of the great European cities of London and Paris in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as Sennett (1977) describes him has little to do with today's knowledge manager. In his stead we see a freshish holder of a Master of Business Administration degree wearing an office suit. Instead of culture, MBA stands for its antithesis. It reminds us that the ultimate truth of the society we inhabit—the dissemination of which is being perceived as a sign of irreversible progress, and not only in the offices of the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund—is that *Greed is good*. Without greed there is no growth, no progress. Without growth, that is, as Gellner told us, without greed there is even no democracy (GELLNER, 1994).

The reduction of the great *theatrum mundi* to the battlefield of global economic competition leaves little space for intellectuals, parasites on a society who are in such pain thinking about other things, that they do not have the slightest intention of becoming economically productive. Mass mobilisation in the global economic war requires everybody to become a soldier on both fronts—production as well as consumption. Higher education

has become one of the expensive services every good citizen is expected to consume to keep the economy growing, even if the dreams of gaining upward social mobility through higher education degrees are being frustrated at an accelerating speed. Life-long learning, so much spoken about recently merely institutionalises the obligation to consume formalized education. Neave perceives this shift in higher education in the following terms:

«This is the transition of higher education from being considered as a sub-set of the political system—the selection of, formation and enculturation of elites—to its redefinition as a sub-set of the economic system—the training of the mass for the private sector labour market» (NEAVE, 2004a).

At this point we have perhaps little agreement on the broader meaning of the Bologna Process. As the reports from different countries indicate (TOMUSK, 2006) expectations are widely diverse, ranging from tapping into resources of richer countries, to securing political favour before Brussels' decision makers and remaining in tune with the processes that would eventually lead to a European system of higher education for those who fall within the borders of the Community. Although not everybody agrees to that, I would still argue that despite its formal set-up, the Bologna Process is primarily a higher education reform program of the European Union that should not be seen originating from signing the Bologna Joint Declaration in 1999, but adopting the Commission's «Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community» back in 1991 (COMMISSION, 1991). The existence of this, unfortunately often ignored document in the context of the Bologna Process also explains the Commission's high interest in it. I would also argue, as I have done elsewhere (TOMUSK, 2004b) that the Commission's primary agenda in the Process is economic. It is through re-designing the European higher education products to increase their competitiveness and success on the world market, particularly in competition against the universities of the United States. All other items included among the goals of the Bologna Process remain secondary, at least for the Commission, who, do we like it or not, has occupied the driver's seat.

This perspective certainly explains the Commission's frustration over endless discussions over the idea of the university, instead of solving the technical questions related to its goals (OLSEN, 2005). This creates a degree of resistance in the academic community:

«The Commission was attacked for vulgarizing the debate. It presented higher education solely as an instrument of economic policy and gave a too narrow interpretation of the university's basic misión» (ibid. p. 23).

The Commission, from its position: «sees itself as surrounded by ignorance and lack of commitment» (ibid. p. 22).

To secure achieving its global goals, the Commission uses all available means from political intimidation, to grant-making and buying-off the knowledge workers. Perhaps the informed reader remembers the historical statement by the former commissioner Reding:

Bologna cannot be implemented a la carte, it has to be done across the board and wholeheartedly. If not, the process will leave European higher education even less strong and united than before (REDING, 2003).

On the wake of that one can notice official and less so Bologna-speakers travelling around the continent and repeating this statement, paying little attention to its relevance or applicability, for example in countries like the Russian Federation (TOMUSK, 2006).

One would perhaps agree that the Commission, which does not have a particularly high level of competence in higher education, and therefore drives the sector strongly towards its vocationalization (see e.g. Olsen 2005) vulgarizes the discussions and de-intellectualizes not only the Process, but also threatens the future of European higher education. In this, it would need a cooperation of knowledge workers in the field of higher education studies. Exploring the role of such pseudo-intellectuals amplifying and spreading the Commission's official discourse offers some insights to broader intellectual conditions of our age.

There is no necessity for the project of creating the European Higher Education Area to take a radically anti-intellectual shape, as it currently seems to be doing. One may even suggest that spending a few units of the common currency, generously made available by the European nations might, if wisely spent, allow some people *with an unusual sensitivity to the sacred and an uncommon reflectiveness*, as Shils (1969) suggested, to engage significant intellectual tasks which otherwise could not be pursued. Though it may well be the case that as it was in 18th century Cambridge where

supporting writing letters was not in the interests of too many of the benefactors and scholars died in the debtor's prison (ARBERRY, 1960/1997), generating propaganda is perceived as a more honourable task among those controlling the purse in Brussels.

Turning now to the rapidly growing body of *Bologna literature*, one may notice that the borders between the genres are increasingly blurred. Among this literature we find first the relatively uncontroversial political declarations: Magna Charta Universitatum (CRE, 1988), the Sorbonne Declaration (DECLARATION, 1998) and the Bologna Declaration (DECLARATION, 1999). On that fundament lies a second layer of political documents, primarily the communiqués of bi-annual ministerial meetings. Beyond that blurring begins: Declarations of the European University Association's conventions constitute the first level of an attempt to reconcile what Neave (2002) calls the «*pays politique*» and the «*pays réel*», that is, the political discourse and institutional realities of European higher education, the former perhaps not fully appreciating the inevitable imperfection of the latter. The *Trend* reports, officially called «Trends in Learning Structures in European Higher Education», three of which have appeared (see e.g. REICHERT, TAUCH 2003) with a fourth under way at the time of writing this paper, represent, at least formally, a move in a different direction, an attempt to inform the political process from the actual state of affairs in European universities as related to various issues of implementation of the Bologna Process. On the top of all of that cognitive production stand the works of the academics that by claiming the status of intellectuals represent the ambition of presenting the naked truth in its entire Apollonian beauty. Contrary to their, one may assume, entirely sincere intentions, His Majesty has been dressed in the most eclectic mix styles even an Italian fashion designer could possibly imagine.

This production carries all the signs of compromise I discussed in relation to higher education research earlier in this paper. It often presents political declarations in the place of descriptions of the actual state of affairs and boosts high expectations while ignoring the inevitably mixed nature of the outcomes. Earlier the many roles academic higher education researchers may undertake in contemporary society were discussed. Among the recent Bologna literature we find a progress report (ZGAGA 2003) compiled by somebody who has burdened his earthly existence with a rather widely

spread mix of two incompatible roles: those of an academic and a politician. The report, which is combines of political declarations with attempts at objective analysis, in itself indicates the apparent cognitive dissonance caused by Destiny's evil experiment to lock in a single skull the minds of both a Professor of Educational Studies and a Minister of Education.

Zgaga (ibid.) has apparently no difficulty in first declaring that «Nobody pushes them [the signatory countries] to that direction administratively; it is more and more the national need and national priority», and then a few pages later precisely the opposite—push: «the Bologna Process was not a mere voluntary action any more for the EU Member States and not for the candidate Member States either», this already in full unison with the former Commissioner Reding in whose professional vocabulary the word *voluntary* seems to have been entirely missing (see e.g. TOMUSK, 2004b). Somebody obviously has to be out there making the Bologna Process a *need* and *priority* for the European nations. Since, however, even the European Union cannot make the Bologna Process compulsory for its member states, as action in higher education remains the prerogative of the member states, it is doing it under the heading of «strengthening European co-operation» (ZGAGA, 2003). With the big stick comes the carrot—the much anticipated market success of new European higher education:

«'Bologna' has become a new European higher education brand, today easily recognised in governmental policies, academic activities, international organisations, networks and media» (ibid.).

Reading the mentioned report and other similar papers encourages one to join Neave (2004) in his question:

«Can it be that the architects of Bologna truly believe that in default of academia, the academic interest can be represented vicariously by a motley and Ersatz conglomerate of experts, consultants many of whom have 'taken the Queen's shilling'?»

While there are theories other than moral corruption available to explain the views expressed in the *Zgaga Report* and similar documents - one may for example think of consciously misrepresenting the reality to unenlightened masses for the sake of their own good - the situation is somewhat different

looking at writings on ‘Bologna’ by academics functioning as academics. That leads us to another of Neave’s observations, that: «In the absence of counter comments, even the most scholarly and balanced piece of research finds great difficulty in distancing itself from propaganda» (ibid.).

The way Neave expresses his position is similar that of Teichler quoted earlier in this paper, to the effect that some researchers are oftentimes *somewhat blind* to certain aspects of certain issues. A recent article by Huisman and Wende that appeared in a learned journal (Huisman, Wende 2004) as a result of an EU funded project suggests that the reason for academics presenting propaganda as research outcomes lie neither in a limited visual impairment nor an absence of critical comments, but may be rather directly induced by the *Queen’s shilling*.

Huisman and Wende have come up with an analysis which appears sanguine even in the context of the most politically motivated official Bologna knowledge. One may think that last time in history similar enthusiasm was expressed by the academics was when comrade Stalin received reports from his *secular priesthood* (for Chomsky’s misunderstanding of Berlin’s concept ‘secular priesthood’ see Berlin 1978 and Chomsky 2002) regarding the success and enthusiasm of peasants joining the *kolkhozes* during the Soviet Union’s forced collectivisation. Without hesitation the authors declare that:

«In less than ten years, harmonisation (preferably labelled as ‘convergence’) of higher education structures changed from an undesirable objective to a highly advisable aim» (HUISMAN, WENDE, 2004).

It remains, though, open who exactly the advisers are. It is only a part of the problem that the approach Huisman and Wende have taken focuses entirely on those signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration that belong to the European Union, skipping the issue of harmonising European higher education with that of the Russian Federation—1,300 chronically underfunded and mismanaged universities enrolling close to six million students, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan and so on and so forth. They also ignore a widely known fact that so far the Bologna Process has been primarily political in nature and that the capacity of the universities to absorb any of the envisioned reforms remains yet to be tested (see e.g. Reichert and Tauch 2003, Neave 2004).

One should obviously not push too far the comparison between the European Union as a federal super-state in the making and the Soviet Union as a federal super-state gone by, although certain similarities, starting with a top-heavy bureaucracy are too visible to ignore. As are the intentions of the enthusiasts of both the constructions. As in the days of yore, Huisman and Wende appreciate the enthusiasm of the European nation states embracing the Union's intervention in an area for which it does not even have a mandate—higher education (see e.g. Tomusk 2004b)—and is therefore, strictly speaking, illegal: «We have maintained that the presumed lack of national governments' acceptance of inter- or supranational interference is not as profound as expected» (HUISMAN, WENDE, 2004).

The following sentence from the same paper will perhaps for some time tower over the Bologna writings, reflecting a particular state of mind in all of its richness and with all its subtleties:

«Fuelled both by the general expectations of the European Commission pleading a European dimension in higher education, but maybe even more by the education policy reviews of OECD, national governments to a considerable extent realised (albeit subjectively) whether their national higher education system was still sufficiently in line with a certain (European) model, even though such an ideal model might never be attainable or might even not be existent in practice (but the idea may be very persistent in the minds of policy-makers and certainly in the minds of those responsible for the reviews)».

Asking for the meaning of *a national government's subjective realisation* would be certainly perceived as a malicious act. It is obvious that the phrase is devoid of meaning if analyzed from the point of view of political science or educational policy. H.G. Wells, back in 1935, wrote exactly about using such phrases, seeing nations, or for this matter, governments, as personalities: «That sort of thing seems to me a romantic simplification of what is really happening in human affairs, and I think it leads to disastrous results» (WELLS, 1935).

There is no doubt that by instigating the production of such texts and reports, which fail to draw a line between political propaganda and intellectual analysis or have been written with the simple aim of pleasing the funding agency, the Bologna Process is not only corrupting the intellectual

sphere in the narrow meaning of the term, but is also eroding the integrity of the scholarship within universities, as well as beyond them.

IV. CONCLUSION

It has, after all, perhaps been a mistake to try understanding the modern-time academics as intellectuals. While one can possibly agree that a significant part of the academia does not yet fall for its intellectual abilities and ethical standards below the society's average and that their daily work is still of cognitive nature, that falls far short of the expectations historically laid before the intellectual calling. Expansion of the university, economic stress, mass production of graduates as well as knowledge products has eroded the intellectual integrity of the life of mind and forced the melancholic to an impossible situation, producing utopian plans:

«Utopia emerges from melancholy with the world and from the world's inadequacy and ends with the impossibility of reflection, the prohibition of melancholy, and the redeeming promise of a stable happiness within a manageable space» (LEPENIES, 1992: 148).

Utopian visions are very much present in the academic discourse of many disciplines, starting from science and technology, biology and other fields, perhaps in a counter-proportional measure to the amount of time individuals representing those fields having spent studying philosophy (TOMUSK, 2004a). In the world of global economic competition melancholy is not exactly encouraged. As some of the reports on the mood in the European Commission indicate, there is still far too much of unproductive contemplation going on in European higher education, and too little action to move Europe to a glorious victory. Surely, the melancholy man does not make a great warrior.

The second mistake would be to try understanding people engaging in higher education studies as academics, even if no longer perfect in their melancholic attitude to the world. Coming from diverse backgrounds these individuals are often trying to convert their life experience into academic capital - papers, talks and books that lead to further access to academic tourism and elevation of the status in the community which does not

necessarily have too much of a respect to administrators and bureaucrats of various brands now better known by the euphemism 'policy makers'. Therefore there seems to be an obvious pressure pushing individuals from the margins of the academic community - interdisciplinary researcher of the life in that community - towards the fount of further prestige and power - the great manufacture of Bologna knowledge. Opportunities abound - from national Bologna speakers to unit level course modulizers, job profilers and credit hour accountants. Political support and legitimacy are guaranteed not by means of recognition in the academic community, but by means of the power extended from government offices and carried by the name of the great Process itself, which, one my guess, academics in the traditional fields do not pay too much of attention to (see e.g. Välimaa *et al.* 2006).

I have no intention to argue that the intellectual corruption currently spreading among the Bologna reporters, promoters and workers is general to the entire academic community. Though it may indicate a direction social sciences are moving under the pressure of what I believe is a somewhat inadequate request to produce applied and policy-relevant knowledge. Under the pressure of such demands academia is losing its autonomy. Perhaps, disciplines that have developed a stronger body of canonical knowledge and have established stronger institutional controls, trading integrity for a grants or a power positions is more difficult than in a research field which is applied and interdisciplinary by virtue of its very definition. But again, massification of knowledge has lead to breaking the social science discourse into hundreds of small enclaves where quasi-academic entrepreneurs, if I may use the words of a Princeton philosopher Harry G. Frankfurt (FRANKFURT, 2005), produce 'bullshit', printing it in each other's learned, or not so much, journals. For the time being, even such knowledge still succeeds legitimating politics. One may though wonder for how long that may possibly last.

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RESUMEN

Una reforma sin precedentes en la educación superior europea, conocida como el proceso de Bolonia, con el objetivo de aumentar la competitividad internacional de los proyectos educativos y la propia educación europea, ha ofrecido grandes oportunidades a los investigadores para trabajar sobre la creación del conocimiento y su diseminación. El autor de este artículo demuestra cómo la agenda política fijada por los patrocinadores del Proceso, interactúa con los mecanismos de producción del conocimiento en aquellos campos que carecen de un fuerte apoyo institucional, llevando a un discurso donde el conocimiento objetivo y las declaraciones políticas están siendo presentadas conjuntamente como conocimiento científico. El autor argumenta que, mientras la educación superior _subordinada a los objetivos del proceso de Bolonia_ representa un caso extremo de compromiso intelectual, otros campos de las ciencias sociales son propensos a experimentar violaciones similares. Esto conduce al autor a concluir que un número significativo del personal docente de las universidades, ha cesado de actuar como intelectuales y, en su lugar, le ha sido designado el papel de *trabajadores del conocimiento*, operando dentro del diferente marco de los requisitos profesionales y estándares éticos. Mientras que a corto plazo pueda parecer beneficioso a aquellos políticos y oficiales preocupados en movilizar todos los recursos posibles para lograr los objetivos marcados, a largo plazo la erosión de la función crítica de los intelectuales puede exponer tanto a los programas relacionados como a la sociedad, a una serie de riesgos normalmente vinculados con regímenes totalitarios.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Conocimiento. Poder. Producción del conocimiento. El Proceso de Bolonia. Las funciones de los intelectuales. Estándares éticos. Utopía.

ABSTRACT

An unprecedented reform in European higher education known as the *Bologna Process* with its ultimate aim to boost international competitiveness of European knowledge products and higher education services has created ample opportunities for higher education researchers to engage in related knowledge production and dissemination. The author of this article

demonstrates how the political agenda set by the sponsors of the Process interacts with the process of knowledge production in the field that lacks strong institutional roots, leading to a discourse where objective knowledge and political declarations are being mixed and presented together as scientific knowledge. While, the author argues, higher education research subordinated to the goals of the Bologna Process represents an extreme case of intellectual compromise, other fields of social sciences are prone to similar violations. This leads the author to conclude that a significant element of the academic staff in mass universities no longer act as intellectuals. Instead, they have been designated the role of knowledge workers who operate within a different framework of professional requirements and ethical standards. While this may in short run appear beneficial to politicians and officials concerned about mobilizing all available resources to achieve their short-term goals, in a long term, erosion of the critical function of the intellectuals may expose the related programs as well as the societies at large to risks usually related to totalitarian regimes.

KEY WORDS: Knowledge. Power. Knowledge Production. Bologna Process. Intellectuals' Functions. Ethical Standards. Utopia.