

LITERARY EDUCATION: NEW HORIZONS IN THE UNIVERSITY'S COMPETITION FOR ELITISM AND ELITENESS

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Summary

The new tendencies of cognition and comprehension of the essence of the University are caused by one of the metaphors – ‘tectonic displacements’ – which is perhaps the best evidence of the process of qualitative transformation in the content and form of the university science and education. In today's dynamic world, too rapid and outwardly chaotic changes are taking place, new horizons are being defined in the understanding and perception of the University as a medium of storage and preservation of culture, outlook, self-identification, as a space for the development of intellectual and spiritual reflexions and the birth of new ideas and thoughts.

It is known that the twentieth century has emerged in the history of scientific progress as an era of competition between elitist and elite education. At the same time, the search for harmony between the fundamental, constant and historically changing principles in the organization of educational system has led to the fact that the 21st century becomes dominated by the eliteness of the university context.

The discourse of the University is expanding with thoughts and enriched with ideas at each new turn of the ‘polaroid lens’. Obviously, one should focus on the aspect of creating or affirming the ‘eliteness’ of education (higher education). It is important to determine what this strategy achieves. However, the first question to answer is as follows: is it a systemic strategy, or just a separate step to elaborate a post-globalized world with the kaleidoscopic impression(s) of knowledge against in-depth, fundamental knowledge as a concept of self-awareness and self-assertion of a personality? Hence, the problem of identity and self-identity is foregrounded, because it is necessary to determine what education (in particular, higher education) is in the modern world. Is it a cultural civilization phenomenon or a specialized pragmatic project?

Since the founding of the University as an educational institution and until now, the philosophical component is one of the important segments of its activity. In today's context of growth of interpersonal connections and expansion and complexity of humanitarian knowledge, a word acquires a special role. The synergy of communication, driven by increasingly complex relationships between a man and technology, intensifies the need for communication, motivates the need to build cognitive chains in order to find the psychological, emotional, intellectual balance of the individual in the incredibly fast-paced everyday life. In this context, one should dwell on literature as one of the most ancient civilization phenomena.

Fiction becomes a necessary spiritual and emotional context for the post-globalized society. Thanks to literature, the assessment and rethinking of the acquired knowledge is performed, new ideas are created and elaborated. The role of fiction is extremely important for the activation of psycho-physiological processes, for the formation and development of skills of imaginative, associative and perspective thinking, for the affirmation of meta-skills of personal self-realization. Therefore, the problems of literary education in the discourse of the University are of particular relevance.

Keywords: the idea of the University, eliteness, elitism, literary education, universalization of meanings, ontological space

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At the end of the second decade of the 21st century, the discourse of the University becomes increasingly relevant – as an idea about knowledge, its creation, augmentation, dissemination, preservation, etc. The institutional and academic space is filled with a sense of changes, an understanding of their need and timeliness. ‘Tectonic shifts’ constitute a metaphor, providing the best evidence for the process of qualitative transformation in the content and form of university science and education. The dynamic world, in which there are too rapid and outwardly chaotic changes, delineates new horizons in understanding and perception of the University as a medium for storing and preserving culture, outlook, self-identification, as a space for the development of intellectual and spiritual thoughts and the birth of new ideas. The world, focused on pragmatic and attainable goals, needs a new understanding of the status and purpose of the University. It is not by chance that the notions of elitism and eliteness are differentiated in the discourse of the modern University, and the knowledge paradigm in the aura of ontological universalism competes with pragmatism and the need for a quick and effective result in the development of the priorities in the university philosophy and structure. José Ortega y Gasset shrewdly remarked that: “It was necessary to wait for the beginning of the twentieth century to see an incredible performance – a performance of specific ignorance and aggressive stupidity, when a person, knowing a lot in one subject, has no idea about all others” (*Ideia uniwersytetu. Antologia, 2002*). This metaphorical description of a kind of cognitive paradox in the first half of the twentieth century characterizes the immediate aftermath of the Third Industrial Revolution. Nowadays, the surplus socio-economic dynamics testifies to the effects and consequences of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, a fact, which has already been recognized and declared. The new quality of human-technology relationships directly influences the configuration of the idea of the University, its fundamental principles, not only the formatting of the content of education, but also the key aspects of involving an individual in a holistic and self-sufficient subculture – the University.

The 20th century emerged in the history of scientific progress as an era of competition between elitist and elite education. The search for harmony between the fundamental, constant and historically changing principles in the organization of educational system has led to the fact that the 21st century becomes dominated by the eliteness of the university context. In particular, S. Kurbatov points out that “the prestige of Harvard or Yale, Oxford or Princeton, Berkeley or Sorbonne always meant a certain significant investment in a young man's future career and involvement in the social environment of the «masters» of life” (*Kurbatov, 2008*). Observations in recent years (approximately after 2010) indicate that the fundamental interdependence of academic status and practical life implementation of the individual no longer dominates in defining the close or more distant plans for self-fulfillment.

One of the important segments of the University's life since its establishment as an educational institution is its philological component. In today's context of growth of interpersonal connections and expansion and complexity of humanitarian knowledge, a word acquires a special role. The synergy of communication, driven by increasingly complex relationships between a man and technology, intensifies the need for communication, motivates the need to build cognitive chains in order to find the psychological, emotional, intellectual balance of the individual in the incredibly fast-paced everyday life. In this context, one should dwell on literature as one of the most ancient civilization phenomena. Fiction becomes a necessary spiritual and emotional context for the post-globalized society. Thanks to literature, the assessment and rethinking of the acquired knowledge is performed, new ideas are created and elaborated. The role of fiction is extremely important for the activation of psycho-physiological processes, for the

formation and development of skills of imaginative, associative and perspective thinking, for the affirmation of meta-skills of personal self-fulfillment.

The fact of the performed Fourth Industrial Revolution must become a text, a context and a background for us. Recognizing and accepting the coexistence of man and technology as a crucial fact, we model a paradigm of humanitarian knowledge that does not imply uniformity or completeness, and does not seek unambiguous answers to explicit and possible questions. In particular, in the field of literary education, the coexistence of natural intelligence with various forms of artificially created mind can have a single trajectory of solution: understanding, harmonization, mutual non-combat. The success or at least the effectiveness of the fourth industrial revolution can only be guaranteed by man, moreover, the *homo sapiens*, in the civilizational status of the *homo legens*.

Methods of teaching literature for a long time were enriched with new ideas, and developed in more or less successful methodological experiments, and thus expanded the space for analytical reflection and practical analysis. For example, one of the most discussed issues is the effectiveness of lectures in training organization. The arguments of lecturer advocates have long been known as well as the convincing arguments of the critics. The rhetorical nature of this discussion is conditioned by its constant relevance, constant importance, and constant reflection. In our opinion, its center is the idea of the University – as a system in the system, as a maximally autonomous sociocultural phenomenon, as a determining factor in modeling the worldview – world experience – world perception. From the standpoint of improving literary education, it should be noted that the study of literature goes to the level of philosophical and ontological generalizations and requires updating the form with the maximum observance of content, in other words: it is necessary to harmonize the lecture canon with the challenges of the present.

Teaching and studying literature in the space of a contemporary humanitarian-oriented educational process is capable of defending those fundamental principles that have shaped the University's discourse for centuries. Thus, according to Maria Zubrytska, “the crisis of identity of the University in today's conditions is obvious – the world is changing rapidly, and the University is less and less affected by these changes <...> the idea of usefulness of knowledge is gradually becoming an idea of self-interest, which already contradicts the very essence of the University” (*Ideia uniwersytetu. Antolohiia*, 2002). M. Zubrytska further states that “the social task of the University is to develop students' critical creative thinking, personal initiative, ability and aspiration for self-education, that is, such skills and abilities that will help them to fulfill their social role with dignity and find ways of realization in this changing world” (*Ideia uniwersytetu. Antolohiia*, 2002) and expresses her concern and doubt about the feasibility of such a social task, because “it is easy to imagine what an academic ideal is today, if it does not guarantee special benefits, does not guarantee high status in society and is also low paid?” (*Ideia uniwersytetu. Antolohiia*, 2002). There are considerable difficulties in studying world literature, since the fundamental ethical and aesthetic concepts, figuratively embodied in the artistic space, must become a part of the mind of the modern student, despite the fact that it is already dominated by situational interest and the need not for knowledge, but for practical skills. It is here that the teacher with a clear vision of the status, challenges, threats and prospects of the modern University is activated. At the end of his speech, Vil Bakirov quite reasonably states that “someone has to explain to a student that he/she generally lives not only to drink, eat, dress, and entertain. That one needs to meet the universal fundamental values that have guided people for millennia. If universities abandon this mission, no other social institute will be able to undertake it” (*Bakirov*, 2017). We believe that literature actually creates the canon of “universal human

values', and that is why literary education must remain among the educational priorities of the higher education system.

Therefore, it is worth acknowledging that numerous methodological searches and innovations, as well as modern technical and technological solutions, evidence that lecture is the optimal form for affirming the spirit and ideas of the University in the prism of knowledge and literature study. The methodology of teaching literature in terms of accessibility and openness of knowledge can be based on the idea of Karl Jaspers: "There is no measure of correctness for lectures. If they are good, they always have a form that cannot be imitated" (*Ideia uniwersytetu. Antolohiia, 2002*). Here, obviously, we can find in the background the idea of the charismatic character of the lecturer, his/her encyclopedic erudition, perfect mastering of the subject of teaching, and disparate influence on the audience. K. Jaspers believes that "a distinction should be made between school and university. Schools are designed to educate and teach all the pupils they have been entrusted with. The university has no such obligation. The purpose of university education is that it is chosen by people who possess unusual spiritual power and appropriate tools. Nevertheless, in fact, the University is attended by an average mass of people who can acquire the knowledge they need. Therefore, spiritual selection is transferred to the University" (*Ideia uniwersytetu. Antolohiia, 2002*). Of particular importance for teaching literature is that the content and form of the modern lecture must take into account the need for the declared 'spiritual selection'. In addition, it is through lectures that literature must assert the 'spiritual power' of anyone who has decided to master the humanitarian discourse. Until now, methodical discussions for or against lecture have mostly concerned the rapid dynamics of scientific material to be learned by the student ('pro') and passivity of listening without a specific result ('contra'). Today, the issue is already focusing not so much on the amount of new knowledge, the dynamics of its accumulation or the quality of its mastering, as on the practical significance of this process.

Above all, adherence to canonicity in defining the subject context and the content of what is being studied is crucially important for the study of literature. In the post-globalized society, the three components of university education do not lose their relevance: "1) the transfer of culture; 2) training of professions; 3) research and fostering of new scientists" (*Ideia uniwersytetu. Antolohiia, 2002*). Lecture maximally synthesizes all these components in the process of studying literature. 'Transfer of Culture' is carried out through the involvement of students in the moral, ethical, spiritual, aesthetic achievements of humanity, embodied in the artistic text. 'Training of professions' takes place in an active dialogue of the teacher with the student in the most personal communication, in creation of a comfortable environment for mastering professional knowledge, skills and abilities. The exchange of experience and impressions is particularly important in this process, as well as the mutual learning of the teacher and the student. This creates a professional technique, daily experiencing objectively predetermined or situational transformations. Another component of university education is 'research and nurturing of new scholars', which is directly implemented in the audience where intra- and extraverted psychological phenomena are encountered for cognition, understanding and systematic study of literature – to capture knowledge (about) of literature(s). If the problematization of critical thinking in the educational process becomes especially relevant now, then the critical thinking of the student-philologist develops from the objectively available text, from the personal form of the author's presence in the process and the result of its presentation. The combination of a professional literary approach with mastering the key scientific ideas, new approaches to understanding and comprehending a text provides the contemporary lectures with a new quality. Large amounts of information, of course, can be obtained in a non-personal

way, since there are many sources and methods for this. However, this information requires active personal reflection, as well as validation at the level of analysis of literary works. In the course of lectures, the problems, ideas, which, in the teacher's opinion, form the conceptual principles of literature study, are identified in the first place. The lecture intonation is one of the most convincing factors of the lecturer's charisma, which gives the opportunity to affirm the leading idea of the University – creation of new knowledge. That is why a lecture at a university can be modified and enriched by methodical techniques, however, it will remain a key form of academic dialogue (between entities that teach and learn). Certainly, the methodology of teaching literature is complicated, because with the movement of the student through the levels of knowledge, the voice of the entity being studied becomes a symphony of voices, turning the dialogue into a polylogue. During the lecture, the necessary accents are set up, a spiritual space is formed with values for the young person who has chosen the profession and stands up to mastering it. Probably, literary education like philosophy cannot have a highly specialized professional purpose. The perfect skill to immerse yourself in the depth of artistic text opens up the intellectual, emotional, creative potential of the individual, which will further affect the effective professional activity.

New challenges require the University to preserve itself, to retain its own identity. As previously, there has been a shift from eliteness to elitism in the creation of the space of higher education, which now is worth reversing – to move from elitism to eliteness. The professional activity of a student (lecturer / teacher of literature), who spent a long time in personal experience and critical reflection of literature, becoming part of the discourse of creating new knowledge, involves meaningful and effective continuation of the acquired knowledge. An important element of this process is the reproduction of the teacher's image (as an entity). Since the 'intellectual and spiritual act' of the teacher is implemented through the courses of lectures, the most important result of the lecturing dominant in the method of teaching literature is to continue the atmosphere of dialogue in order to achieve a certain educational goal. Therefore, the role of lecture in the context of the Idea of the University is to shape the character of a person who deliberately chooses truth as a goal, a science as a means of achieving a goal, and it is professionally oriented to the area that will enable him/her to embody the mastered spirit of search and progress in the best possible manner.

One of the fundamental foundations in the idea of the University remains unchanged – it is the determining and guiding role of the individual at the department. Thanks to the lecture form, the mission of the University is really achievable. The well-known statement of Vasyl Sukhomlynskyi that 'For his/her best lesson, the teacher is preparing throughout life' can metaphorically proliferate with new methodological ideas.

Thus, the latest literary criticism and literary methodological practice is much more in need of not so new or updated programs with the change or replacement of authors and works, as psychological and pedagogical diagnostics and correction in the area of age psychology and professional methods. The question becomes more relevant: how to interest a young reader in a book? The answers give an opportunity to mark the professional horizon of discussion and reflection: how do elitism and eliteness correlate in shaping readership? As a matter of fact, there is an internal opposition: only a person with a perfect meta-reading skill (belonging to a narrow elitist circle of educated, erudite, self-motivated creators and carriers of culture) can teach reading, but a wider range of pupils and students should be taught (forming the discourse of eliteness of reading). Therefore, the first challenge is to overcome the psychological barrier between those for whom reading is a necessary existential prerequisite and those who are just entering the 'orbit' of the aesthetic polylogue. Despite the fact that a book is now inferior to

other sources of information, it remains an attributive priority – it is the artistic text that creates, shapes, develops, refines and approves the aesthetic canon. That is why we are now actively balancing the two educational paradigms – of elitism and eliteness – in the evolution of the reading-receptive-interpretive-analytical phenomenon. That is why it is necessary to continue to face the contemporary challenges and needs of methodical search in the field of preservation of literary education and its effective implementation.

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