



Summary

The University of the 21st Century. Between the Humboldt University and a Research University

May 2019 marked 100 years since the grand inauguration of the first year at the Piast University, which a year later became the University of Poznań. Since 1955 the institution has borne the name Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. In 1950 and 1951 part of the organisational units at the University of Poznań underwent a transformation to become independent institutions of higher education, which operate today under the following names: Poznań University of Medical Sciences (Karol Marcinkowski), Poznań University of Life Sciences and Poznań University of Physical Education. Perhaps these four universities might one day revert to a single organisational form: *The University of Poznań*. If only this could happen.

Keeping their common heritage in mind, the rektors (vice-chancellors) of these four universities appointed the Interuniversity Committee for the 100th Jubilee Celebration of the University of Poznań to prepare a programme of events for this auspicious anniversary. One of the most important jubilee events of 2018/2019 was the international scientific conference entitled “The University of the 21st Century – from Humboldt to University 4.0”, held between 3-4 April 2019 in the Collegium Minus building. Its aim was to attempt to present the directions in which higher education might and is expected to develop in view of the present and future challenges stemming from what has been dubbed ‘the fourth industrial revolution’, of which we are witnesses and participants. This stage of development of human civilization is undoubtedly related to such phenomena as digitization, the growth of artificial intelligence, cloud computing and enhanced reality. These entails the necessity to adapt the function and organisation of universities to current and foreseen challenges. They also impose a need to take up and intensify new directions for scientific research, and also to modernise the tuition offered.

This book brings together texts produced on the basis of parts of papers presented at conferences (and some opinions from panel discussions). These texts are divided into two parts.

Part I is titled *What University?* and includes texts whose authors sought to provide answers to key questions.

This part opens with an important text by the sociologist Piotr Sztompka (from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow) that relates to the vision of the classical university. Sztompka's chapter is perceived as primary in terms of the discussion on the relevance of the university model, and in particular its 'cultural dimensions', irrespective of what the proponents of the 'enterprise university' might think. Sztompka warns against subordinating what is most valuable in the concept of the European university (dating back to the University of Bologna) to short-term corporate interests, and against adopting a subservient role towards business institutions, particularly in their 'vision' of preparing students for a servile role as modern-day slaves. As Martha Nussbaum has noted, this vision is destructive for universities and leaves no space for the humanities (unless reduced to an auxiliary role). Piotr Sztompka is of the opinion that the present-day university is a place where two competing cultures clash: the academic (community) and the corporate. The former has taken on the form of "a culture of community" (professors and doctoral students/ undergraduates), characterized by friendship and family networks. The latter has led to the gradual disappearance of those values that created the 'cement' for the former. Unfortunately, we might get the impression that the classical model of the university seeks to replace itself with academic enterprise model.

The next two chapters, written by the philosopher Zbigniew Drozdowicz and the psychologist Jerzy M. Brzeziński (both from Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań), also relate to the idea of the classical university, and echo the ideas presented by Piotr Sztompka. Both authors embrace the classical, Humboldt university model. They note how they were educated in the classical, Humboldt-model university, developed their creativity under its continuators, and how they feel an affinity with the community culture.

In his text, Maciej Żylicz, a biochemist and molecular biologist, president of the Foundation for Polish Science, refers to the concept of research universities. Drawing on the experience of countries with a far more advanced organisation of science, Żylicz formulates criteria that are difficult to fulfil in Poland today, and which allow such a university to be distinguished. It would be worth our decision-makers giving their attention to this idea, as the conclusions of this important text are extremely relevant at present.

Acquiring (in the name of the truth) and publishing (in the name of sharing the most up-to-date knowledge with the next generations) the latest research findings and constructing new methods and technologies on them is one of the university's duties.

The other, equally important duty of both students and university lecturers is being open to cultural, religious and political diversity. The main idea here is for the contemporary university to be ideal not only technologically, but also in terms of empathy. The strength of the university, as Michał Bilewicz (Warsaw University) argues in his paper, lies in its “political and cultural diversity”. On the one hand, it is important for the university to follow the ideals of a research institution, i.e. pursuing its scientific goals. On the other hand, it is equally important to pursue its formative goals, in line with the signatories of the *Great Charter* (see also: J. Brzeziński’s paper). As Bilewicz argues in his chapter, an open university is a creative university.

The pursuit of the truth is one of the most essential duties of the academic community. This idea recurs in the works of the great thinkers and founding fathers of the classical idea of the university, such as Paul Newman, Karl Jaspers, Kazimierz Twardowski, Leszek Kołakowski, Barbara Skarga or Klemens Szaniawski. The scholars participating in the conference were also clear about perceiving the truth as placing the truth in the primary position within the system of values constituting the axiological dimension of the contemporary university.

Anna Wolff-Powęska (from Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań), a specialist in the history of ideas and political science, also raises the issue of this essential value in her paper. As a historian of ideas, she focuses on the importance of truth in teaching history. It is essential for us, she argues, living in the bizarre times of ‘post-truth’, not to lose the basic meaning of truth and also to resist manipulation, to refuse to accept as truth the kind of message that is constructed by an ideologically biased sender.

The next article, written by Grażyna Borkowska, a historian of Polish literature and a literary critic (from the Institute of Literary Research at the Polish Academy of Science), focuses on the situation of women researchers working at Polish universities during the Polish partitions (late 19th century) and in the newly liberated Poland of the interwar period (until 1939). Borkowska’s article enriches our knowledge of the kind of obstacles that had to be overcome by women who decided to work and pursue their career at universities in Poland during the partition period and between the two World Wars.

This part of the book ends with a chapter written by Dariusz Jemielniak (from the Koźmiński University in Warsaw), a sociologist specialising in new technologies in education. He convincingly argues against the common myth that Wikipedia entries diverge markedly from such serious encyclopaedias as Britannica in terms of their quality and the reliability of content, as well as the wealth of references to relevant literature in the field. When deliberating about the future, and not such a distant future, we have to face the challenges of new media in educating students. Following this line of thought, as D. Jemielniak forcefully argues, it is essential to put the universally accessible Wikipedia in its well-deserved important place.

Part II, which is entitled *State vs. university*, contains two chapters. These are written by Marek Kwiek and Emanuel Kulczycki, respectively (both from Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań).

Marek Kwiek draws from his extensive experience in the field of higher education systems and raises the issue of growing social stratification within the academic community. This phenomenon triggers various tensions, and we are therefore of the opinion that it requires more attention. Perhaps it calls for the introduction of preventive measures, and what should also be taken into consideration is the possibility of offering therapeutic support to those who so require. Concern is aroused by the fact that the evaluation system and the access to financial means for research as its derivative may result in the elimination from higher education and research institutions of those more sensitive people who lack the psychological resilience to resist pressure. Are we not threatened with a kind of aggressive capitalism? What about values?

This kind of discussion is continued in the article by Emanuel Kulczycki, a philosopher specializing in the evaluation of academic research. He focuses on the concept of the “evaluation game”. The main point here is the fact that as the state introduces various measurement tools designed to evaluate research, researchers engage in resistance against the evaluating authority (the state). The author analyses various causes triggering this evaluation game.

This volume also includes presentations from one of the panel discussions (moderated by Emmanuel Kulczycki) on the following subject: What impact should academic research policy have? The future of the university vs. the priorities of the state.

The editors of this volume hope that the conference papers collected in this volume will acquaint the reader with the key issues in discussing the ideal of the university, its present and future condition, which are not only being raised in academic circles.

Jerzy Marian Brzeziński, Tadeusz Wallas

Translated by Rob Pagett