



## Alexander Kiossev

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- <sup>1</sup> This paper was read on the conference dedicated to Jürgen Habermas' *Facts and Normativity*, which took place in November 1999 in Sofia. I would like to express my gratitude to my Serbian colleague and friend Obrad Savic, who supported my revision of the initial version by sending me copies of papers on the University which were not available in the Bulgarian libraries.
- <sup>2</sup> The Principle of Reason. The University in the Eyes of its Pupils in *Contemporary Literary Criticism. Literary and Cultural Studies* (third edition), edited by Robert Con Davis and Roland Schleifer, New York and London, 1994.
- <sup>3</sup> From the vast literature on the American university situation, I have tapped several basic books and magazine issues dedicated to higher education: Tornstein Veblen, *The Higher Learning in America* 1918, 1993 Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, USA; *University for a Changing World. The Role of the University in the Late Twentieth Century*. Ed. By Michel D. Stephens and Gordon W. Roderick, Halsten Press Book, NY, 1975; Higher Education, special issue of *New Literary History*, Vol. 26, Summer 1995, Number 3; The American Academic Profession, special issue of *Daedalus* Fall 1997, Vol 126, Number 4, *The Future of Academic Freedom*, ed. By Luis Menand, University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- <sup>4</sup> Karl Jaspers, *The Idea of the University*
- <sup>5</sup> All these essays and studies of Habermas are published in his book *Kleine politische Schriften*, Suhrkamp, F.a.M. 1981 with the exception of the text "Die Idee der Universität - Lernprozesse" which can be found in his book *Die Idee der Universität. Versuch einer Standortbestimmung*, Springer Verlag, Berlin 1988.
- <sup>6</sup> Quotation according to the English translation "The Idea of the University – Learning Processes" in *The New Conservatism. Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate*. Jürgen Habermas, edited and translated by Richard Wolin, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1994, p 101 – 102.
- <sup>7</sup> Let me mention just a few – the PHARE programme, the Socrates programme, the National programmes of Soros foundations as well as the international programmes HESP and the Institute for Educational Policy: the recently started within the stability pact Graz–process; the conferences in Budapest, Liubliana, Warsaw, Sinaia, Sofia; numerous publications of the type *Education for Transition. Higher Educational Policy in Central and Eastern Europe. Country Reports*, a publication of CEP, in association with the Institute for Wissenschaften von Menschen, Budapest, 1997.
- <sup>8</sup> A number of independent researches were carried out with the most fascinating one of them being the paper of Jose Joquim Brunner: *Bulgaria. Higher Education: Policy Design*, 1999. From the Bulgarian analysis, a special heed should be given to the publications of the Ministry of Education and Science as well as to authors like Boian Petkov, ogdan Bogdanov, Pepka Boiadjieva, Georgy Dimitrov, Patricia Georgieva, Marko Todorov, Dimitar Denkov, etc. See also the book *The University Autonomy and the Academic Responsibility*, ed. Pepka Boiadjieva, Sofia, 1999.
- <sup>9</sup> *Newspaper Macedonia*, IV, N 29 / 28 February 1870.
- <sup>10</sup> *State Gazette* 63 / 11 June 1887
- <sup>11</sup> cited by Ivan Georgov, *Review in the Development of the University*, Sofia 1929.
- <sup>12</sup> Rather indicative that the term tertiary education which in Bulgaria sounds like "superior education" ( in Bulgarian the comparative degree for the adjective "high" – "higher" is identical with the adjective "supreme") was substituted by the only apparently synonymous "higher education" in the wording of the Law of 1894. This replacement seems to indicate that the law–makers were some how abashed by the hidden transcendent character of the "supreme" and therefore opted to replace it with the word higher which only suggests one grade more. In other words, the revision of the Act tends to approximate the university

education with "higher" education highlighting its applicable or empirical character.

- 13 This is what Schelling had to say in his *Lectures upon the Method of the Academic Education* (1802): "The gift to perform propounded work in the specialised science (...) relates to the ability to see everything including the specialised knowledge in interrelationship with what is Primary and Unified. Every thought that has not been perceived within the spirit of this unity and totality is inane (...) Only the absolute universal is the source of ideas and ideas are the pith of science. The one who only knows his peculiar academic specialism as a separate one and is incapable of universal in it is not worthy to be a tutor and guardian of science." *Dimensions of the University Idea* comp. Pepka Boiadjieva, Sofia 1995, page 42.
- 14 The term "as yet" is one of the most frequent symptoms of the uncertainty, risk and the provisional character of the whole undertaking of Agura's and all the others' fears of *fasco*.
- 15 Only after the physical and mathematical faculties (1889 – 1890) and the legal faculty (1892 – 1893) were founded – the end of the century saw a fascinating precedent demonstrating the way the Bulgarian professors and academic authorities viewed philosophy and its role. From Schelling's, Humboldt's and Schleiermacher's standpoint this instance would be simultaneously sad, ludicrous and scandalous. It demonstrated vividly how fragile the autonomy was (underpinned by the Act from 1894 on) and simultaneously how philosophy in the Bulgarian university was lightyears away from the privileged vantage point the Prussian reformers wanted to give it. In March 1899 the Ministry of the People's Education attempted to appoint Dr. Krastio Krastev as a philosophy lecturer directly by its already established practice getting around the Academic Board. To the same end, the Ministry even suggested that the Academic Board broaden the subject of the discipline. The proposal was relegated to the history and linguistics faculty and, on 24 March 1899 the Dean reported the Faculty Board decision: "taking into account that much more significant specialities in the faculty are taken on by one teacher alone the faculty finds it inappropriate to broaden the teaching of philosophy. The Academic Board concurs with that view" (Georgov, Ivan, *Review in the Development of the University*, Sofia 1929, page 42 – 43). The statement should have made the German reformers turn in their graves. Let us just remind ourselves for the sake of contrast of Schleiermacher's words, which were as visionary as they were unrealistic: "the teaching of philosophy is commonly recognised as the basis of all in the university...philosophy is the scientific spirit as a supreme principle and the immediate unity of every kind of knowledge... a reiteration of the already concurred (by the private disciplines) from a superior view point...this is a centre which should confirm the achieved knowledge of nature and the mutual relationship of every kind of knowledge" (*Dimensions of the University Idea*, comp. Pepka Boiadjieva, Sofia 1995, pages 155 – 156). Throughout German idealism, the philosophical faculty was upheld as the hub of all universities supporting the universal unity – every lecturer had to be rooted into the philosophical faculty. Habermas then proved that the romantic demand was already utopian in its own time in Prussia, let alone in Bulgaria in the 1890's.
- 16 Georgov, Ivan, *Review in the Development of the University*, Sofia 1929, page 18.
- 17 Georgov, Ivan, *ibid*.
- 18 Agura, D., "The Supreme School in Sofia", the *Bulgarian Review Magazine*, year I, 1893, issue 1.
- 19 Georgov, Ivan, *ibid.*, page 33.
- 20 On the election of the first rector and the competition between Stanimirov and Alexander Teodorov – Ballan rather amusing comparisons could be made between the memories of Georgov (op. cit) and Alexander Teodorov – Ballan in his *A Book about Myself*, Sofia, 1988.
- 21 On the issue of the student disturbances in 1897 see the brochure of the student association "Progress" under the title *Towards the History of the Supreme School*, 1897, published by "Progress", Sofia.
- 22 This is a part of the first declaration of the professorial body called *To the Bulgarian Society*, dated 10 January 1907. This passage is incidentally one of the few which draw on the link between autonomy, freedom and science in relative detail out of the string of declarations published by the university society in the course of the crisis. The above arguments are reiterated and see some variance but not too many new points to the benefit of legal detail such as criticising the new law were added. Elsewhere, it is mentioned that the act of the government humiliated the moral dignity of the professorial person, a crucial factor in education and that this suppression of science and the free thought will in essence instigate the professors engage in oppositional public and academic conduct and finally that the new law will designate something a university which will not in fact be a university, etc. (All documents are published by Ivan Georgov in his book *Review in the Development of the University*). Yet in practice a profound reflective discussion of the grounds of the university autonomy and freedom never took place.

- 23 Freedom is needed for the impartial non-partisan pursuance of truth protected from empirical government or civil interference.
- 24 Parallel to the attempts to win public opinion with both political and legal indictments against the government and with a just defence of the academic interest the polyphony of this text clearly harboured conservative tones and loyalty to authority. It is claimed for instance that by means of its longstanding disciplining of politicised students the Academic Board had even been more consistent in sobering up pork barrel students than the government and society themselves. The professors had even been condemned for braking the students, for being indifferent to social matters, for being retrograde and obscurantists. Thus in this political manifesto the apology of the autonomous science blended in with the claim that it is exactly this pure science especially in country like Bulgaria which has the potential to sober up every kind of extremism and utopian inclinations carried along by the newcomers to the university.
- 25 On this issue see the chapter "The Self-Colonised Cultures" from my study *The Lists of the Missing* in the book *The Bulgarian Canon*, comp. Alexander Kiosev, ed. B. Penchev, Sofia 1998.
- 26 From the appeals of the professors society in January 1907.
- 27 Quotations from Agura's article "The Supreme School in Sofia", *The Bulgarian Review Magazine*, year I, 1893, issue 1. It is fascinating to see the way Agura continues: "we cannot take the objection that science is cosmopolitan and could therefore be scooped from any academic institution. Science itself is virtually cosmopolitan but it is being developed in one individual centre and it is a manifestation of social organism just like any other cultural phenomenon in human kind. Its progress is also due to the relative evolution of individual societies." This part is followed by examples referring to the English, the Romans, the Greeks, etc. – all examples seem to follow a Herderian teleological model of the evolution of individual nations.
- 28 On this issue, see *The Bulgarian Canon*, comp. Alexander Kiossev, ed. Boiko Penchev, Sofia, 1998.
- 29 See the article of Boris Nikolov "With Poetry at Politics", *The Culture newspaper*, December 1999.
- 30 On the issue, see my articles "The Silence of the Lambs", "The World of the Wrestlers", *Capital* and the "Private Life of the Public Language" in *Media and Transition*, in print.
- 31 This argument corresponds with the radical claim of Bill Readings that the university is not founded upon the truth but onto a Herderian notion of culture and nation "The University without a Culture" *New Literary History*, Vol. 25, Summer, 1995, No 3. Unlike Readings, I believe that both types of legitimacy/illegitimacy coincide yielding what I call the "asymmetry of the university situation".

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