FORUM 46: CHANGES IN THE SCHOLARLY LANDSCAPE

Abstract: This 'Forum' is devoted to recent changes in the institutional organisation of academic work and their consequences. The participants discuss the changed conditions for academic activity: the state science policy in various countries, the position of (young) colleagues in academy institutes and universities, the grant system and the work of researchers in short-term projects and research groups, the criteria by which the results of academic work and the scholar's success are judged and the reliability of metrics, the divergence in positions and mutual distrust between academic administrators and researchers. The respondents indicate the most acute problems, and suggest solutions that might improve the present situation, and alternative schemes for organising academic work.

Keywords: institutional organisation of academic work, science policy, evaluation of research results.

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EDITORS' QUESTIONS

The situation in, with, and around academic life is in constant flux. There are those who think that all change is for the worse, and thereby place the 'golden age' of scholarship in the past, there are those who assure us that the 'golden age' is in the future, and there are those who say that there never has been and never can be any such thing. But it is not a matter of evaluations. It is certainly not possible to evaluate 'the process as a whole', nor changes 'in all disciplines': there may be stark differences between the situation in different fields of scholarship, in different countries and even in different towns.

The purpose of this 'Forum', as the editors see it, is to discuss certain specific questions which have been on everyone's mind in recent years, and to collect opinions on whether the changes that are taking place are beneficial to the social sciences and humanities and to their individual representatives — ethnographers, anthropologists, folklorists... The three dots are there because we do not want to limit the fields where we plan to collect opinions. The editors of *Forum* invite you to answer the following questions:

1 *Changes in the institutional organisation of academic life*

We are accustomed to 'academic work being done' in stable, solid organisations — institutes

or universities. Now, however, there are several tendencies that can be observed simultaneously and which reveal a new, different way of organising academic life. The concept of tenure is gradually being deleted. In the institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences it is only the 'old-timers' who have permanent contracts. Nowadays one can only get promotion by transferring to a fixed-term contract. Fixed-term contracts have become the norm in universities. Grants make up a greater and greater part of the work (and salaries) of academics, and it is becoming harder and harder to get a grant for individual research. It is not easy to accommodate a single collective project to an existing department of an institute or university, and so research groups are created *ad hoc* to take part in such projects, and once the grant has run out they are broken up and redistributed amongst other projects.[1] Success and mobility are gradually becoming synonymous for the researcher. What could be the consequences of this sort of movement for scholarship, teaching and museum work? What form should modern academic centres take? Is the concept of a 'school' meaningful in such conditions?

2 *What is happening to academic work and its results?*

Everyone knows the situation when work is done under grants that stipulate regular publication of articles in the journals of one 'base' or another. In the case of a large project the group does as a rule manage to collect material and publish the necessary articles, but a large part of the material remains unstudied and unpublished, because there is no time for it: the grant has run out, and the next grant is in operation, and articles now have to be published for that. The material that has been collected remains in the archive and never reaches the reader. Does such a system in fact reduce the 'productive outcome' of academic work or, on the contrary, do the faster tempo of work, more concise publications, and rapid changeover of research topics favour the accumulation of knowledge? What other changes have occurred in this sphere in recent years?

3 *How are the results of academic work evaluated?*

The results of academic work in institutes and universities used to be assessed by official commissions made up as a rule of scholars from other institutes. Now the results of academic work are mostly assessed by means of so-called metrics. How do you regard this and other methods of evaluating academic work? What form of assessment of results would you propose?

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[1] See the recent publication on the 'intellectual corporations' that are replacing traditional research institutes: Ivan Petrov, 'Kak sdelat iz Akademii nauk intellektualnuyu korporatsiyu' [How to Make an Intellectual Corporation Out of the Academy of Sciences], *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 21 April 2020. <http://www.ng.ru/science/2020-04-21/9_7849_institutes.html?fbclid=IwAR2apOig09K8y1jYdnA1xGBYBeEHhtTgT089L6YX-N9UhfbOnll3-FcjEvM>. (In Russian).

IGOR ALIMOV

1 As for me, I am convinced that a diversity of manifestations can only be beneficial to any science. Diversity is dictated by the problems set out by scholars and groups of scholars, and also by the tasks commissioned by the state. If a problem is such that it can only be solved within a stable, solid organisation over many years, then there ought to be such a possibility. If a problem can be solved by a combination of scholars from different institutions in a temporary group that will be dissolved at the end of the project, then there ought to be that sort of possibility as well. If in order to solve a specific problem, scholars need periodically to work in different institutions and centres and then return to their main place of work, then that possibility should also be provided for.

This is all obvious if we make scientific truth, rather than science in the service of society, our cornerstone. However, it is insistently suggested that scholars should take the consumer point of view: science is a service (and for many years we regarded it as an honour to serve!). Here two completely different models of understanding the essence, aims and tasks of academic activity collide. One is the traditional one, which requires a group of like-minded people who study the fundamental problems of existence over a long period in the same place, which

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results in the formation of long-lasting academic schools. The other is the postmodern one, in the entrepreneurial style currently fashionable, which does not require like-minded people, but a working group of researchers who cater to the state's requirements or receive a grant for an agreed period for some fashionable topic. The latter case is ruled not only by mobility, but servility.

Fundamental research cannot exist on the principle of 'may I take your order' — that is rather the nature of applied research, and even that will not produce any good results without a lively interest on the part of the researchers in the problem being studied. Interest is born of the researcher's impractical inspiration and his / her love for his / her subject. Researchers are usually faithful to the object of their love, but now are more and more often being offered casual affairs and brief liaisons. What is required of is success: the more grants you get, the more interdisciplinary projects you participate in, the more articles (which, admittedly, nobody reads) publish, the more appearances you make at conferences, the more successful the scholar's virtual image is. As a result actual content is lost behind formal indicators.

Our present organisation of academic life is orientated, precisely, on form: every three years everyone without exception has to change their research topics for different ones, unlike their previous ones (and Buddha forbid that they should be anything similar!), and every year a certain number of articles, decreed from above (by quota) must be published in journals with a high rating, and, moreover, incrementally, that is, more of them every year. This fragmentation and necessarily superficial realisation are gradually killing off large academic projects that demand a long time for their work, without leaving any prospect for development or general work in a particular direction. Just try compiling a scholarly dictionary of modern Russian in three years! That is simply impossible, which means that there will be no dictionary, especially since such a volume is evaluated by the metrics as a single output. Otherwise the scholars will have to wriggle out of it by proposing a three-year plan for the first three letters of the dictionary, and so on through the alphabet three years at a time. It is ridiculous.

All these newfangled (or officially imposed) tendencies must be followed blindly, otherwise we shall simply forget how to see the overall sense and the distant prospect, but we shall grasp the three-year horizon of expectations and learn how to do things in bits — every three years. With this approach there is no question of any academic schools. The best we can hope for is to stand for a day and survive the night. Still, if the world is going to carry on losing its meaning, what is the point of academic schools? All it needs is mobile groups of researchers who flutter from institute to university,

from one little grant to the next little project, and all in a glow of presentations with the Hirsch index round their necks.

With the triumph of the brave new world, academic schools will cease to exist: the titans have gone, their pupils will go, and their pupils' pupils will change their boots (or have them changed for them), and there will be no one to replace them...

2

I must admit that I never understood that strange system when one's research topic at one's main place of work was never supposed to be the same as the topic one had got a grant for, and the work for the grant was supposed to be done in some abstract 'free' time. If an academic got a grant for a subject that (s)he was working on according to what the state employed them for — what was wrong with that? (S)he got extra money for working on his / her subject, and did not have to tear themselves in two between the subject of his / her institutional research and the subject of his / her grant — what was wrong with that?

Here we return to the question of what scholarship is in the modern world. If it is a service, then there ought to be a price for it. The price is determined by the state, which is mortally afraid of overpaying, and so, in accordance with Lenin's heritage, it brings in accounting and monitoring everywhere. How can administrators, who only know how to administrate and distribute, evaluate the work of scholars about which they know nothing? That's right, they must determine monitoring parameters and make absolutely sure that they are observed. Hence all those monstrous formulae by which 'academic norms' are now calculated.

Here we must also consider that knowledge in the humanities is increased not by articles, but only by monographs. The time is long past when an important article was discussed by the whole academic community, when there used to be detailed reviews of collections of articles and scholarly almanacs. It is a time of deflation: there are too many authors, too many titles, and often their topics are too narrow and trivial. Researchers carry on writing articles as parts of a future book, the publication of which will solve the problem, but the articles themselves are nothing more than consumables.

The present organisation of academic life leads inevitably to salami publishing. Unless there is a proper analysis of the material (followed by its publication as a monograph), there is no question of a growth of knowledge, only of its senseless inflation: one slice goes into the article, another into the archive, another lies on the table waiting to be finished, but what chance is there of that? We have a new grant, a new research topic, and a new interdisciplinary project. And we have to write reports on all of them.

This does not mean that I am in any way opposed to research grants. They impose discipline, but a scholar must have the opportunity to continue the research that (s)he has begun and publish a book, in order for scholarship really to be advanced. Outside the grant, (s)he should not be limited in the time which (s)he needs to solve their research problems, and the subject of the grant might perfectly well be continued as a personal research topic alongside the subjects that (s)he has to pursue for the institute. Only this is a more complex and less closely monitored organisation of academic life than the modern administrator is capable of understanding.

The present time allows no time for stopping and thinking. It does, of course, reduce the productive outcomes and lowers their quality. Essentially, this system is only suitable for solving short-term problems. As graduates of different schools in St Petersburg, where we were taught to look for substantial content in our labour, we work in spite of it. And it is only this 'in spite of', while it lasts, that allows major academic projects to develop. But the younger generation is arriving (has arrived!), and it is orientated on short-term problems. For us a scholar makes his / her fundamental academic statement in a monograph, but for them the defining type of work is a publication in a journal with a high rating. We want to leave behind an academic school, or at least a shelf of books in a major world library, but what do they want?

3 Metrics cannot be defeated, but their appetite can be moderated. In fact, metrics are now something like the Procrustean bed, which lops off any parameters of academic activity that are not needed for 'accounting and monitoring', and cares only about form, not at all about content.

Almost every day we receive invitations from various 'international' journals which publish articles in all academic disciplines following the simplest algorithm: 1) register the author; 2) format the material in accordance with the editorial requirements; 3) send the article to the publisher's email address for review (the review is done by the editorial board within a single day); 4) await the positive response that the article is accepted and instructions *for payment of the fee* for publication. The aims and objectives of such journals are formulated thus: 'to inform the scientific community about progressive researches, to raise the level of standards of scientific texts, to help delete the boundaries of scientific activity throughout the world.'[1]

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[1] Thus in the original: see the identical descriptions of the *Norwegian Journal of Development of the International Science* on the Scientific Electronic Library portal of elibrary.ru: <https://elibrary.ru/title_about.asp?id=63254> and of the *Magyar Tudományos Journal* on its site: <http://magyar-journal.com/mtj/magyar-tudomanyos-journal> [Eds.].

So I sit and wonder what this progressive research might be that can be published immediately upon payment. We should call things by their proper names: publications in journals that are counted when the indicators of results of academic activity are calculated for the requirements of metrics. And once again quantity comes in first place, not quality. Scholarship is being adapted to business: a scholar must pay for publication in journals which through some misunderstanding have been included in certain databases, so as to receive a salary increase and not to miss out on prizes.

What other methods of assessing academic activity might there be? They have been known for a long time: published monographs and their reviews. The late Alexander Martynov once wrote a long and very interesting review article, prompted by my first academic book, and that was a mutually beneficial experience, and a contribution to the discipline of Chinese Studies. But, alas, those times are gone...

TIMOFEY ARKHANGELSKIY

1 I have only been engaged in academic activity for ten years. Essentially I have seen nothing other than the system of grants and projects described in this question, so that I have nothing to compare it with. It seems to me that it does not prevent the existence of academic schools or permanent groups without official status. I have, for example, been part of a project to describe the Beserman dialect of Udmurt since 2012. It began in 2003 as an official expedition of the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics at Moscow State University, but over time it grew into an informal collaboration in which linguists from half a dozen institutions are participating or have participated, and the participants have changed over time. That is, it is a project in the sense of 'an activity with common goals and methods of work', but not in the sense of 'a clearly defined circle of tasks with a deadline which has been supplied with funding.' In some years it was funded from grants specially obtained for the Beserman dialect, and in others from grants which were only partly for Beserman, and sometimes out of the researchers' own pockets. The fact that I have been working in Germany since 2017, and in July will start working on my third

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project (in the second sense), does not prevent me from doing fieldwork and publishing jointly with colleagues working on Beserman, though we have by no means always been corecipients of grants.

As for mobility and permanent posts, the most unpleasant consequence of temporary contracts seems to me to be the constant need to be moving from one place to another. In the West such mobility has long been the norm and, it seems, is regarded as beneficial to scholarship. But constant removals have a negative effect on a scholar's quality of life. In the first place, family problems arise. If one of a couple gets a job in another town, the other has to find one there too. If they are both academics (as is often the case), then simultaneously finding work in the same place is usually difficult, and if they are both involved in the same area of study (which, for some reason, often happens to linguists) it is practically impossible. Their children have to change their surroundings, or learn another language from scratch, if they move to another country. Besides, moving is in itself an exhausting and debilitating undertaking. Even if these problems are not so frequent or not so acutely felt in one's student or postgraduate years, they seriously complicate life as one gets older.

In principle I am for mobility in the wider sense, the sense of the possibility of changing one's research topics or moving from one formal or informal academic group to another, but I am sure that there is no benefit to scholarship from regular changes of place. It is not right, of course, to stay in the same place all one's life reading only the works of one's closest colleagues. But if you attend international conferences several times a year and from time to time spend a couple of months in another town on study leave or within the framework of a joint grant, that is more than enough for forming academic connections and understanding what is going on in the world.

2 This question evidently assumes that a rapid turnover of research topics is the result of the system of projects and grants. I do not think that it is always so. There is indeed a constant procession of grants in the life of an academic, but the topic of one often emerges naturally out of the results of the previous one, so that overall the research area of an individual, or of the group (s)he belongs to, remains the same or evolves naturally.

Anyway, the problem of material that has been collected but not made use of existed in field linguistics and certain other disciplines in the humanities long before the appearance of short-term projects and grants. A whole hour of working time can be spent on the transcription and annotation of one minute of recorded speech. It is not therefore surprising that practically every project for documenting a language produces, in addition to publications and properly

prepared texts, a 'data graveyard' — a huge amount of audio, video and photographic material, at best sorted and provided with some fragmentary metadata, at worst without even that. Besides this there is the practice of 'sitting on material', when the researcher or the institute lacks the resources for processing the data, but will not allow anyone else to use them.

At least two methods of dealing with this problem have been developed in the West: compulsory archiving and grants for processing data.

The principle of compulsory archiving means that all data collected must be deposited in a suitable electronic archive or centre for long-term preservation before the end of the project. Many universities have formed such centres; as for linguistics archives, the CLARIN network has been functioning in Europe for a long time, and its various centres specialise in different sorts of material. There are a number of requirements for archives and the data they contain, the so-called FAIR data: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. The archive and the scholar have the common goal of putting the data into a form where anyone who needs them can find them and use them. To this end archives make sure that all their material is provided with metadata of the proper quality and kept in files with widely used and easily readable formats, they use versioning, and they provide every item with a doi or a comparable identifier (this is necessary to facilitate the automated exchange of information), and so on. If the data have been deposited in such an archive, one could hardly say that they are 'stuck in the archive' in the traditional sense. All these efforts are directed towards making it possible for other people to use them in future. A growing number of funding bodies require a researcher to provide a data management plan already at the application stage, i.e. a brief description of what original data the project plans to collect, whether it is not possible instead to make use of already existing data in archives, how the new data will be preserved and processed during the project, and what will become of them afterwards. I really like this trend and hope that it will reach Russia too.

At the end of a project some funding bodies allow either a brief extension of it, or else a new, smaller grant expressly for completing the processing of data. Within such a project a researcher works exclusively with what (s)he has previously collected and does not collect any new data. Among Russian examples I can cite the International Linguistic Convergence Laboratory of the Higher School of Economics (ILCL HSE), which gave several grants in 2017 for the completion and publication of already existing, but incompletely transcribed audio corpora. This seems to me a very useful activity. It is a pity that it does not yet often happen.

3 I would like to begin by pointing out that metrics are not everywhere so widely used as in contemporary Russia. In Germany, where I work now, they play a much more modest role. When one's cv is assessed, peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed publications are counted separately, but I have not encountered any more complex gradations. I do not know whether anyone here demands articles in Scopus or WoS. And designations such as Q1 and Q2, long familiar to everyone in Russia, would most likely baffle a German scholar, since (s)he has never come across them or the concepts behind them.

At the HSE University, where I worked previously, it is considered that the use of metrics stimulates scholars to publish more and write better. Both the stick, in the form of the minimum number of points that must be counted for publications, and the carrot, in the form of substantial bonuses for publishing in the high quartiles, are orientated on the indicators of metrics. I must say that this stimulus does not work on me. For my first two years in Germany I have received an Alexander von Humboldt fellowship, which does not make any demands at all. They give you a fixed sum every month, and you can study whatever you like and however you see fit. Instead of a report at the end they ask you to fill in a questionnaire with questions like 'How did you like Germany?' While I was in receipt of that fellowship I did more than I had in five years of work at the HSE University, including the publication of three articles in Scopus, which nobody had required of me. It turned out that all I needed for that was enough time to do the work and an office. A friend who works at Google, incidentally, recently told me the same thing: 'We don't even have deadlines, but everybody still somehow does everything on time.' Initial filtering and favourable working conditions do their job.

The main trouble with constant strict monitoring (euphemistically called 'stimulation of publication activity') is, in my view, the breakdown of trust. If the university, the funding body or the state is constantly checking up on someone in accordance with formal requirements, they feel that they are on the other side of the barricades, and as a result begin to think up various means of fulfilling these requirements with minimum efforts, and not always the most honest ones. And so we get paid-for publication, wiles such as the inclusion of the translator of the article or the leader of the group among the authors, mutual citation cartels and simply sloppy work. This has a negative effect on scholarship.

Leaving this general problem aside, I am worried about the quality of assessment by metrics. I cannot say that it does not work at all. If X has over the last three years published five articles in the first quartile of Scopus, and Y, who works in the same field, does not have any, that probably means that X is a better and more productive

scholar than Y. Nevertheless, in many cases the existing methods give a very inexact evaluation. Take linguistics, for example. If we sort the Scopus journals in the 'Language and Linguistics' section by their impact factor, we see that it is by no means only the quality of the journal that determines their place in the table. We find many journals on multilingualism or language teaching towards the top of the list simply because these are large fields with many people working in them. There are no journals devoted to Uralic languages (on which I work) in the first quartile, nor are there ever likely to be, because this is a relatively narrow field in which only a small number of people (on the scale of linguistics in general) are interested. Thus representatives of different subdisciplines find themselves in unequal conditions. At best this will lead to a difference in the salaries and career opportunities for linguists from different fields, at worst the university could decide that small fields that do not bring in Scopus points should be abolished as 'unprofitable'. These are serious side effects which ought to be removed or mitigated by improving the assessment algorithm.

The instability of the criteria is another problem. The quartiles are recalculated every year, and when works are assessed the practice is to take the newest ones. But, apart from the very top journals, this parameter is quite volatile. If a journal is in the second quartile today, there is no guarantee that it will still be there in a year's time. Since there is at best a year between submission of a manuscript to a serious journal and its publication (at least in linguistics), the choice of a journal is, if not a complete lottery, still something like playing the market. If authors want to maximise their metrics indicators and salary, they must have a good instinct for which journals are likely to 'rise in price', or at least not fall, over the next couple of years. As on the stock exchange, something does depend on instinct, but to a large extent it is still a random process. At the HSE University this uncertainty was complicated by the fact that the rules for encouraging employees depending on all these metrics changed roughly once a month. (I do not know if that's still the case now.)

I greatly doubt that the vector will change direction in Russia in the near future. But if in principle we cannot do without assessment of academic activity, I would make two suggestions. First, the criteria for assessment, whatever they are, must not change so fast. Everyone who submits an article to a journal must be able to understand what metric bonuses they will get if their article is accepted. Second, I would suggest a combination of metrics and review. If a scholar has 'passed' in terms of metrics, fine. If not, the results of his / her work for the period under assessment should be sent to two or three reviewers from the same field who would be able to notice and evaluate what the algorithm has not noticed. Perhaps the person concerned has published a first-class article in a not altogether

popular journal, or has published primary data that other scholars will be able to make use of? (Incidentally, the publication of initial data, the collection and preparation of which require qualifications and time, nowadays adds hardly anything to the rating, and that is another big problem.) If so, the reviewers could raise the assessment given by the algorithm. At least this would allow for the elimination of inaccuracies in the work of automatic systems, and make the procedure more transparent and honest in the eyes of scholars.

ELENA BEREZOVICH

1 My opinions in response to all the questions on the list will be quite conservative. I am convinced that the concept of the traditional academic school is meaningful, convinced that strong schools with firm traditions are always able to renew themselves, adopt new spheres and methods of work, and, naturally, to cooperate with researchers from other schools. Of course, traditional schools can have a tendency to be 'inward-looking', a strong inclination towards 'mutual citation', but this is too minor a side-effect to justify overthrowing such schools. (I repeat, a 'healthy group' including young people will always be able to overcome its 'growing pains'.) I am convinced that a strict regimentation of grant conditions, and of ways and means of academic cooperation is counter-productive. For example, at the end of 2019 a grant competition was announced for a well-financed project with the following, to put it mildly, eccentric conditions: the recipients must not be representatives of neighbouring fields of knowledge (for example, no historians and linguists together) and of neighbouring regions (so a group of people from Yekaterinburg and Perm would not be allowed). Of course, one can imagine that such a competition would indeed produce a brave new research group: let us say, toponymists from Yekaterinburg and cartographers from Moscow would combine to carry out the resulting project. But something tells me that such groups should be formed (as indeed they are) out of inner necessity (or external necessity, for example the consolidation of representatives of different disciplines to make

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sense of the problems of the pandemic), and not in conditions of administrative compulsion, when such an unprecedented somersault has to be turned six weeks before the New Year: there is a high probability that it will bear a distinct stamp of Ostap Benderism.[1]

It is unrealistic (in the vast majority of cases) to fulfil the conditions of a megagrant that supposes a distinguished scholar, from Tel Aviv, say, or from Hanoi, Bobruisk or Bryansk, should live in a different region (in a laboratory created 'under him / her' for three years) for three months of the year. In reality his / her native Bobruisk will never let them absent themselves for that kind of time. It is clear that in some five cases out of a hundred such an 'arabesque' can be organised, and will even work productively. But when ninety-five large research groups spend a vast amount of nervous energy, time and virtual paper on 'adapting' to such conditions, this must also be recognised as counterproductive for the development of scholarship and its normal planning. Another passing detail illustrating how, as so often, our left hand does not know what our right hand is doing: the conditions of a grant, as we have said, often assume a combination of scholars from different institutions, but here there arises the sacramental question of where to 'locate' the grant: at institution A, B or C. If it is located at A, then researchers from B and C will spend a great deal of time and energy in order to go and work there, but that is not the main thing: this is by no means in the interests of the administration at B and C, because then there will be problems with affiliation (the grant-holders at A and the funding bodies want academics from B and C to write that they belong to A, but the administration at B and C actively obstruct this, because then the publications will do nothing for the ratings of their institutions).

Even if all these questions can somehow be resolved, much more time goes on making the froth than on the actual drink...

As for the scheme of the modern academic centre, as far as I am concerned, that is a good old department (all right, or a school within the department, or even more than one) which cooperates with other schools to solve new problems and develops some superstructure (very well, some new academic centre that combines several institutions, etc.). All new structures must be flexible and mobile. If they prove productive, then they could prove the basis for a new department in a few years' time. But this must come from within the academic community, not from outside. Funding bodies should allow the most varied configurations for carrying out academic work and not invent unviable constructions.

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[1] As in the famous trickster hero of Ilya Ilf and Yevgeny Petrov's novels *Dvenadtsat stulyev* (*The Twelve Chairs*) (1928) and *Zolotoy telenok* (*The Little Golden Calf*) (1931) [Eds.].

2 'Does such a system in fact reduce the "productive outcome" of academic work?' Yes, yes, yes and yes again!!!

Of course, the situation regarding 'productive work' is, in this case, different in principle in different academic spheres and fields of study. Thus, in the natural sciences, and medicine in particular, it is not only fundamental monographs that are of essential importance, but also — especially — the operative exchange of the results of experiments and trials and of opinions. It is more than clear that this is most in demand in those cases when science has to be mobilised to solve some fundamental problem: now, during the COVID-19 pandemic, this goes without saying. The format of journal publications is necessary here, of course, but even the possibilities of 'express' journals are sometimes insufficient, particularly taking into account that the speed with which serious journals operate is relatively slow because of the time taken by peer review, editing, the creation of all the peripheral paratext around the article (which, in terms of the amount of effort spent on it, is no longer peripheral), the long queue of authors wanting to be published, and so on. Therefore there is a need for some kind of 'field hospitals' with lightning turnaround of publications, in which short contributions could be printed and discussed and the interim results of research presented. This consideration shows yet again that a single journal format for presenting the results of academic research for all disciplines and all situations is impossible and inefficient.

Here I am essentially repeating the most banal and frequently formulated things (especially recently). I am repeating them in order to approach a truth which has already been proclaimed many times (but is still very important) from an angle which is new to me: every discipline, by means of centuries of selection, develops by itself the most effective forms of presenting its results, and they are, obviously, different in the humanities and the natural sciences. Literary studies in this country was 'nourished' on monographs, famous series of collections, dictionaries, atlases, editions of old texts with commentary, etc. Fifteen years ago, articles in journals did not by any means occupy the first place, giving way to publications in collections, not to mention monographs. The whirlwind of metrics and the worship of the false gods of Scopus and other 'rated' journals are doing irreparable harm to literary studies. One could again raise a whole heap of problems here, among them the language of publication, but in the light of how the question has been asked I shall concentrate on two aspects.

The first has been rightly noticed by the initiators of the forum: grants come to an end, some of the material remains unpublished, and, most importantly, is often not communicated, not funded,

and not written up as a monograph (the main outcomes have to be high-rating articles, popularly known as 'milch cows' or 'Scopus articles'). Because of the flood of authors, journals are cutting the length of articles mercilessly, and the vast 'periphery' that we mentioned before eats up a large part of the text (say, if a dialectologist or etymologist has needed thirty dictionaries — and it can be more — when writing his / her article, then their entries in the bibliography, with all their editors and their titles translated into English, takes up practically half the length). The pursuit of grant indicators and the absurd situation where articles weigh more than monographs leads to well-founded, verified results appearing less often in the academic space, being replaced by endless interim results.

Highly important forms of scholarship, such as linguistic atlases, are perishing or being subjected to rigorous cuts. They are being continued by heroes, but there is practically no stimulus to this, publication of interim results is made difficult (literary journals do not like to involve themselves with reproducing maps); this is precisely where 'large formats' are needed — non-standard, and nowadays not considered and not encouraged.

I shall give one more detailed illustration. It is clear that the lexicographical description of Russian dialects (which are 'stretched' over wider areas than in any other language in the world) is a most important task not only for Russian Studies, but for comparative and historical linguistics as a whole, at the least on a Eurasian scale. Although the fundamental *Slovar russkikh narodnykh govorov* (*Dictionary of Russian Local Dialects*) is being published by a group of heroes, it is unable to include the whole vast diversity of dialect dictionaries that are being published, some of them by amateurs (particularly for the first half of the alphabet). The present situation of short-term grants, contracts and reports means that many groups produce little 'vocabularies' (of a particular district, river basin, etc.). There are also major 'players' in the field (the groups producing the *Arkhangelskiy oblastnoy slovar* (*Arkhangelsk Regional Dictionary*) or the *Pskovskiy oblastnoy slovar* (*Pskov Regional Dictionary*), for example), but the little vocabularies also have to be taken into account (particularly considering how under-researched many parts of Russia are), and there is such a number of them that in a country where there are dozens of able dialectologists it would be hard to find five who are not only able to use all the dictionaries they need, but even know of their existence. Thus, one consequence of the 'time-serving' of grants and other short-term projects is a sharp reduction in opportunities for working in those fundamental formats necessary to language and literature (the large-scale dictionary, the corpus, the atlas, the encyclopaedia, etc.) and a catastrophic entropy of knowledge in the field.

There is another circumstance that furthers this entropy. The seemingly 'technical' procedure of our 'crossing over' to journals from the series of collections mentioned above, has substantial consequences. There were famous series, known the world over, such as *Etimologiya*, *Slavyanskiy i balkanskiy folklor*, *Balto-slavyanskie issledovaniya*, etc. With a set of such collections, one could have a very complete idea of the range of problems and the techniques of a particular field, and of the scope of what has been done in it. Now, when many series either no longer exist, or come out much less frequently, or have lost some of their prestige, one has to 'collect' the range of problems of the field in which one is interested, which is scattered over a wide range of very disparate journals. Moreover, while series volumes were devoted to a particular topic, journals usually combine layers of a very wide range of problems; journals with a narrow focus on folklore are rare in the field of literary studies. Thus, in many fields of knowledge centripetal tendencies have given way to centrifugal ones, and we can say that despite the great advances afforded by digitisation and the possibility of viewing sources electronically, scholarship is experiencing a second wave of 'dissolution' (the first was in the 1990s), since it is harder to collect the literature in the 'years of metrics' than it was in the preceding period.

3 I have a sharply negative attitude to assessment by metrics; I have written about this already in *Antropologicheskij forum* (there are some pros, but they are heavily outweighed by the cons).[1] I cannot myself complain of low indicators in metrics, but I am categorically against summarising and comparing apples with oranges.

As for the evaluation of the results of academic work, nothing has been invented that is better than professional expertise and the mechanisms of reputation. But the experts must never be self-appointed, as sometimes happens.

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1 The further I advance into my seventies, the more confident and secure I feel. Apart from extreme situations (they are not to be excluded, but there is no reason why they should arise), who, or what, could stop me from working? It would be nice to have a grant or a salary, but I shall survive anyway, it is not as if I need much. Therefore I look at the current problems of academic life from something of a distance.

[1] See no. 40 (2019) [Eds.].

All reservations made, the efficiency of scholarship, as of society as a whole, depends most of all not on the form of its organisation, but on the good sense, honesty and goodwill of the members of society. Aristotle did not assert that democracy is better than aristocracy or that monarchy is worse than democracy. The opposition looked different. There are good forms of government (democracy, aristocracy and monarchy) and there are bad ones (ochlocracy, oligarchy, tyranny). Wherein lies the difference between them? In everything — and in nothing in particular. One society is sensible, honest and humane, while another is irrational, corrupt and cruel.

There cannot be definite standards for the organisation of scholarship. It is important for the people on whom something depends to behave properly, to place the interests of the cause that they serve above short-term advantage, to be engaged, competent and mindful that they are working with people, not with computers. If this requirement is fulfilled one way or another, the rest will somehow fall into place. Culture is labile, and adjusts itself to different conditions. So does scholarship.

It is hardly possible to speak of scholarship as a whole. Geneticists or physicists have completely different budgets, rhythms of work, and scales of results from the humanities. Our disciplines are slow, you can do nothing worthwhile in three years, sometimes not even in ten. Twenty years would be about right. And one wants to ask, what's the hurry. It will be another four hundred million years before the earth is swallowed by the sun: we have time. People were in a hurry in France under Louis XVI, and we are still dealing with the consequences. In the humanities, general erudition and knowledge of languages are critically important. Accordingly, the learning process continues for one's whole life and is not completed at the end of one's undergraduate or postgraduate studies. Many of us are working on topics that do not require a large number of specialists; they number a few individuals or a few dozen, and not just in Russia, in the whole world. In such a situation it makes no difference at all where these specialists are located: in one department, one institute, one city, one country, or in different countries. It is convenient to be able to talk face to face, but if that cannot be done, no matter. The main thing is to understand each other. Therefore the dissolution and formation of research groups, mobility or the lack of it, are not our problem. Just don't get in our way, don't try to bend us into shape — you won't much succeed, but it's not a pleasant experience.

2 Material has been, and is being consigned to the archives not because of work under grants, but for many reasons. The most common one is evidently this. Doing extra work on the assumption that the material collected will come in useful later is not productive. If it is a routine activity like the obligatory investigation of all the

archaeological remains on a given site, there is nothing to be done about it. But that is not a problem of scholarship in the narrow sense. In a research project everything is immediately put to use, or if not immediately, still, nobody will forget about the material that has been put aside. There is another substantial factor. I shall work on my topic irrespectively of whether I am paid for it or not. It is of course better if I am paid, that allows me to travel, to buy the books I need, which is much easier in a shop in Zürich or Stockholm than over the Internet. That is what grants are for. But it is not critically important.

3

Accountability is essential: one must have the fear of God before one's eyes. Even the most responsible person is capable of relaxing and loosening his / her grip. But beyond that everything is individual. Again, for physicists and geneticists the criterion of truth is practice, or if not, it is an evident result that everyone can see and understand and which can be easily explained to a first-former. If there is a result, that is good, if there is not, that is not good, it is something to worry about. In the sciences of the humanities (if they are sciences, and not something else) there should also be a result, but, firstly, it takes longer to obtain it, secondly, someone who is not a specialist in the field may not find it impressive, and thirdly, it may take years before it is clear whether the result is correct or not, and even whether the direction within which the work was conducted was correct or not. All this must be taken into account by those people who have to monitor it, but that does not mean that it is in principle impossible to assess a researcher's activity. We all know more or less who is doing real work and who is occupied with foolishness and outward appearances, who can tell us what (s)he has discovered and who cannot, because there is nothing to tell. Achievements, or the lack of them, are not always accurately reflected in reports, but it would be an exaggeration to say that they are not reflected there at all. Complete justice and objectivity are unattainable, but partial justice and objectivity — why not?

As for metrics, the root of our current problems is in the evolution of civilisation, not in the worst direction (it could always be worse), but not in the best either. In the twentieth century Germany and Russia ceased to exist as autonomous scholarly centres. This was a tragedy, but it was what it was. There was one centre left. It is quite natural that the people connected with it created an assessment system for scholarly work starting from their own aims, needs and possibilities. However much we try, we shall never be able to fit into that system on an equal footing, and for one single rather silly reason: our native tongue is not English. This is hardly a substantial circumstance for the natural sciences, but in the humanities, even a comma in an article has its significance. How to solve this problem? There is one way: make Russia into a rich, prosperous country which

invests generously in science and education, and everything else on the list. But since this is not going to happen any time soon, we have to work with what we have got — if we are not going to hang ourselves. Especially since many of the articles which do not find a place in high-rating journals really are of no value. The struggle for honest, serious and interesting scholarship against idlers, crooks, incompetents and fools cannot be won. It will always be waged, with varying degrees of success, under any form of accountability and organisation.

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My answer to the questions asked will be somewhat unusual, since it simply rejects these questions as irrelevant. I do not mean to say that the editors are incapable of formulating relevant questions. Simply the situation that obtains within the humanities and social sciences may be experienced in different ways, and depending on the system of coordinates that we follow, the same questions may appear either important or virtually meaningless. Here I wish to show the reader a different system of coordinates.

To begin, I shall use an unexpected analogy, and compare the situation in the humanities and social sciences to a state of affairs in chess, the more so as they are to a certain degree akin in their simultaneous gravitation towards the exact sciences and the arts. Moreover, as I shall show below, allusions to sport will not be beside the point either.

So, in the world of chess there are many questions that can be discussed: the system of timekeeping, the rules for conducting tournaments, the scheme of distribution of prize money, and much else. But some players (and great players, such as the world champions Capablanca and Fischer) have more than once called for a reform of the game of chess itself, because (and here is a paradox!) the evolution of chess is gradually depriving the game of its meaning.

The problem is that the evolution of chess theory at times leaves the players no room for independent decisions: they know in advance (they

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have learnt it!) how they should act in a particular situation. As a result, a game might be won not by a chess genius, but by a mediocre but very assiduous player who has learnt many games by heart. Today the real struggle in a game of chess between grand masters begins around the tenth or even the twentieth move, and as a result the opening is more like a ritual, the sense of which is remembered only by the aged. In my opinion, modern scholarship (and by scholarship, here and hereafter, I mean the social sciences and humanities) has also to a significant degree turned into such a ritual. This is why questions about whether mobility in scholarship is a good thing, what is happening to academic schools, whether the scholar's accelerating tempo of work assists the accumulation of knowledge, etc. are losing a great deal of their meaning.

Why do I think this? It would seem that, leaving aside scholars' eternal complaints of underfunding, scholarship is developing progressively: new topics and directions are emerging, new journals are being founded, the number of academics and the number of works that they publish are constantly increasing, and ever new metrical indicators are being invented. In general, work is at boiling point. So what is the problem?

To understand that this is not the case, academics should look at the work of this learned anthill from society's point of view. We do, after all, exist on the money that the state levies from society in the form of taxes, part of which it spends on scholarship. To all appearances, we should in exchange provide some benefit to society. And now, hand on heart, let us answer the question: do we provide much benefit to society and what does scholarship exist for nowadays?

In recent years I have been studying the reflection of unscientific knowledge in the outlook of society, interested in particular in how Russian mass culture absorbs the ideas that belong to our native neopagan milieu. The deeper I go into this question, the more I realise how weak scholarship is when confronted with low-grade nonsense. Scholars are often inclined to blame the state for this, enumerating its sins: the underfunding of scholarship, unsuccessful reforms of education, poor support for culture. But are not the scholars themselves to blame?

For whom do we write our articles? What is our ultimate aim in producing academic knowledge? And is it knowledge that we produce, or just academic texts? Does a new academic text communicate new knowledge, and if so, to whom?

Today we publish our articles primarily to give an account of the work we have done (for example, for a grant) and to acquire a little bit more scholarly gravitas, which should in future assist us in

getting more grants and eventually improve our own living conditions (which a scholar has to think about, just like other sections of the population). Consequently, we are very interested in publishing our articles, and therefore we are ready to make them the way major journals want them to be, even if this contradicts our own ideas of what good articles really should be. Our aim, in submitting an article, is to make it so that the editors and reviewers will like it. Not the readers! And we also want our article to be cited by other scholars. We do not need a wide public: the main thing is that as many of our colleagues as possible should cite it (for which it is not even necessary for them to read it, the abstract is often enough). However, to be honest, we would be glad of the very fact that our article has been published in an authoritative journal, even if nobody ever cites it (at least we can tick the right boxes, and maybe get a salary bonus too). When we publish an article, we want to please somebody, give an account of ourselves to somebody, stand out from among the crowd: the funding body, the employer, the journal's editorial board are the people we write for. We do not worry about whether society will have any use of our article, whether humanity has any need of it — that sounds far too exalted.

Nor can we easily hope that our work will be appreciated if not today, then sometime in the future. Even the requirements of some journals specially note the necessity of quoting recent articles, as Maria Stanyukovich indignantly noted in a recent issue of *Anthropologicheskij forum* ['Forum...' 2020: 49]. (It is obvious that there is no particular academic sense in this, but this practice serves the interests of the journals themselves, and particularly their citation indexes, which are the main beneficiaries of this universal citation-counting campaign.)

It must be concluded that we write articles primarily because we have to: we play by the rules, that is what we are paid for and that is how we live. This practice of the production and sale of goods that nobody needs is so ridiculous that it is worthy of the pen of a postmodernist writer with his / her trademark ironic description of seemingly serious things. And indeed, Pelevin does take every opportunity in his books to laugh at the humanities of today. It is hard to deny that he has grounds for it...

However, tragicomic episodes from academic life hit harder than any satire. Now academic journals publish meaningless texts created by computer programmes as if they were scholarly articles [Bocharov 2009], and now a scandal breaks over the publication by a series of serious international journals of completely nonsensical and absurd articles composed as a provocative experiment by a group of Western researchers [Lindsay et al. 2018].

Moreover, this experiment shows that the guarantee of success for the modern scholar is not mobility, as the editors of *Forum* write in the preamble to their questions, but, to use a sporting term, *technique*. It is enough to have a good grasp of the rules of the game and do what the academic journals expect of you. (And so it took these authors only six hours to create one of their articles!) If you can also choose a fashionable topic and present your material from the required ideological standpoint (in this experiment, gender studies and a feminist approach), you can expect the progressive academic public to sing you dithyrambs.

To sum up, articles that deserve publication in a prestigious journal should not so much correspond to academic standards (these standards are vague, and ultimately everything depends on the position of the editorial board) as be prepared according to recipes that are actually in demand. I am particularly 'enraptured' by articles where, before proceeding to set out any specific questions (for the sake of which I am reading the article), the author spends a long time deftly juggling citations from contemporary academic literature (preferably in English and freshly published in journals indexed in Scopus and WoS). I can just imagine the journal editor rubbing his / her hands in glee, and the reviewers frowning as they force their way through the thickets of theory to get at the essence of the article. Incidentally, Pelevin invented the interesting term 'linguo-dudos', meaning 'an NLP[1] technique on which contemporary philosophy and theory of art are based. Essentially L. is the creation and use of linguistic constructs which reflect nothing but the combinatory possibilities of the language with the aim of paralysing someone else's consciousness. It is essentially a linguistic DDoS attack that attempts to make the human mind "hang" by making it continually scan and analyse hard to understand combinations of words with a vast number of possible vague half-meanings' [Pelevin 2017: 313]. You couldn't put it better.

Of course, the general public (certainly not the Russian general public) does not read academic journals, and in view of the above it is easy to see why. Therefore the place of science in the popular consciousness is increasingly occupied by pseudoscience, which is directed at active communication with the public and lives by it. It is interesting, and at the same time horrifying, to observe pseudo-scientific ideas infecting the major mass media — newspapers and national television stations, even such seemingly respectable ones as *Kultura*. (So as not just to have to take my word for it, I can demonstrate this through the example of the spread of ideas about 'Slavonic runes' among the public [Beskov 2019; 2020].)

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[1] Neurolinguistic programming [Eds.].

What can the Russian academic community offer against this? Nothing! The more able scholars usually spend their time writing profoundly intellectual articles which are unlikely ever to become part of the heritage of the Russian public (especially if they are written in English). The less able engage in plagiarism, publish the same texts over and over again, or print articles completely devoid of any academic value in 'junk' journals for money. So can there really be a serious discussion of the questions asked by the editors? Is it not time to recognise that our work nowadays does not have an end user and therefore, however productively we might work, is meaningless?

Can one suggest any way out of the impasse which I have just described? In general terms, yes. The main thing, in my view, is to stop feeding the illusion that it would be useful for Russian scholarship to be integrated into world scholarship. Do not be in too much of a hurry to jeer at me and put me down as a chauvinist and an obscurantist. I am not calling for breaking off academic relations or any restriction on the rights and liberties of scholars. But I do think that we need *national* scholarship directed primarily towards developing *our* society, involved in public discussions, suggesting ways of solving the problems that face *us*. This should not be thought of as a call for isolation: was not Russian scholarship before the Revolution part of world scholarship? Of course it was. But, at the same time, Russian scholars founded journals published in Russian, wrote for the most part in Russian, read their lectures in Russian, promoted the development of national education and the opening of public libraries which were to be filled with literature in Russian. Russian scholarship was part of world scholarship without ceasing to be national. It is as if, in our desperate attempt to incorporate ourselves in world scholarship, we are embarking on a new, for the time being virtual, 'philosophers' ship',[1] and sailing off to foreign shores, forgetting that there they have more than enough intellectuals of their own. (The American Philosophical Association has more than three thousand members in its Oriental section alone, while a handful of philosophers in ancient Greece did more for philosophy than all of them put together [Mittelstrass 2015: 81].) And, as the experimental provocation mentioned above proved, these intellectuals are concerned about problems which, fortunately, are still very far from Russian reality.

Complete coalescence with world scholarship would be potentially fatal for Russian scholarship, not on the organisational or financial level, but on that of ideas. While reaching the logical conclusion of the evolution of chess and other logical games could lead to the

[1] The reference is to the ships in which Nikolai Berdyaev and other philosophers and intellectuals at odds with Marxism were expelled from the Soviet Russia in 1922 [Eds.]

death of the game as 'solved' (when all the moves are calculated and a draw is the inevitable outcome), the future of the social sciences and humanities could be defined as an 'unsolved life', by which I mean the ritual imitation of the search for academic truth completely unconnected with the actual needs of society.

Only the state is capable of changing this situation. Hoping that scholarship will regulate itself is just as naïve as counting on the market economy, left to its own devices, to satisfy all the needs of society in the best possible way: the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that we cannot do without state regulation. At present our state is fighting for the prestige of Russian scholarship abroad by increasing the percentage of articles by Russian authors in the overall mass of publications counted in international citation indexes. What was at first sight a good initiative has turned into a demand that Russian academics should play someone else's game according to rules that put them at a disadvantage. In any case, taking part in it does the country no good, unless it be the moral satisfaction of achieving certain planned indicators, which in this case look very like the plan to 'win' Olympic medals. But turning scholarship into a sport clearly does not make it any more meaningful...

Is our state capable of rearranging its priorities and starting to fight for a genuine recovery (or rather reanimation) of national scholarship? It probably is. There are no fundamental obstacles to this, but it does require a clear political will capable of overcoming the desperate opposition of the milieu — functionaries of different ranks, holding academic degrees that they do not deserve, university chiefs whose contribution to scholarship has been highly dubious, the horde of university lecturers who have made the turbid waters of Russian scholarship a fertile fishing ground, the editorial boards of 'junk' journals, and various 'experts' whose reputations might be destroyed.

And it seems that the ice has begun to break. The news at the beginning of this year of a mass retraction of scientific papers from Russian journals was a worldwide academic sensation, and even got a mention in *Nature* [Schiermeier 2020]. However, there is still a lot of work ahead. And even if this work is finished, there will be further steps to be taken. For example, will an academic who regularly publishes the same article more than once, and who is an expert for a state funding body, be removed from his / her post after several of his / her articles have been retracted? And given that (s)he was appointed by recommendation (i.e. personal contacts) and not on the basis of any objective selection, as the spiral of organisational deductions unwinds, others in the council of experts would also be up for ejection. But these are all respected people who did not end up there by chance either. Who will be the Hercules to cleanse these Augean stables? I cannot give an answer to that question. But I think

that an honest discussion of the prospects for Russian scholarship might bring one closer.

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The 'Grey Zone' of the Academy

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The Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR, which enjoyed huge prestige during the late Soviet period and was the main centre for fundamental research, afer independence lost its status and privileged place in the hierarchy of academic institutions. While studying how this had happened, we encountered an interesting fact which several groups of reformers had

previously had to contend with in the 1990s: most of the economically 'useful' academic undertakings and institutes were located in the so-called 'grey zone'. By the beginning of the 1980s there were 140 academic institutions in Kazakhstan. Although only thirty-one of them, i.e. less than a quarter, were associated with the Academy of Sciences, the general opinion was that those were the ones where the main academic forces were concentrated.

However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Academy of Science's attempts to take control of scientific institutions throughout the country were unsuccessful. The Academy, despite its conspicuous visual presence as the 'main' scientific centre in the country's capital, was merely the tip of the iceberg of institutional scholarship in the Soviet period. Nevertheless, the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR's prestige, status as a 'temple of science', and seemingly evident integration into the smoothly functioning system of Soviet science continue today to provoke post-Soviet nostalgia for the 'high-level' fundamental scholarship that there used to be 'before'.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, maintaining the Academy of Sciences was too heavy a burden for the new state. In the period after independence the government was faced with the task of reforming both the academic institutions that were accountable to the republican centre and those of the 'grey zone', which included research institutes in particular branches of science and the research institutes and laboratories connected to the military-industrial complex — military training grounds, cosmodromes, factories — and even entire towns 'in the steppe', like Stepnogorsk. Galym Abilseiitov, the minister responsible for science at the newly formed Ministry of Science and New Technology, formulated the task as follows:

The need for change is determined by the fact that Kazakhstan is now an independent state and the whole organisation of science and technology in this part of the former Soviet Union demands complete rethinking, because all the links have been broken and all the structures need to be put together anew. I have in mind the nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk, and Baikonur, and Sary Shagan, and the Ulba Metallurgical Plant. How can they be organically integrated into the economy of Kazakhstan, and how can their solid scientific and technical potential be rationally employed? [Abilsiitov 1993].

The excerpt from an interview with Galym Abilseiitov sets out the basic problem: most of the leading institutions of the military-industrial complex and specialised science associated with the industries were not subordinate to the Academy of Sciences, nor to any other scientific authority in Kazakhstan. Despite its lack of direct authority, the Academy of Sciences had a sufficiently high status both as a centre for fundamental and applied research and as a sort of host for the various expeditions and field research

conducted on the territory of Kazakhstan by academic institutions from outside.

Galym Abilseiitov, as a representative of more 'applied' sciences from the 'grey zone', a doctor of technology, a specialist in the field of laser technology, the former director of the Research Centre for Technical Lasers of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR at Shatura and, most importantly, one of the pioneers of conversion and commercialisation of the former military industry, found himself in conflict with the academic nucleus of the Academy of Sciences, which was fixated on its 'fundamental role' and determined to preserve its status under the new conditions.

This conflict was finally resolved by the first president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, and not in the Academy's favour. Nazarbayev said in a speech at a plenary session of the Academy of Sciences on 2 February 1994 that he was tired of the academicians' endless conversations about the 'fundamental role' of their research and came close to accusing the Academy of being of no practical use to the economy of Kazakhstan:

While I recognise the exceptional importance of fundamental research, I must remark that most often people here just talk about it, and this talk frequently conceals frank inactivity, lack of creativity and a failure to understand present-day realities. In the recent period, paradoxical as it might be, the Academy of Sciences has not proposed a single fundamental research project. At the same time many scientists consider it beneath their dignity to do concrete work aimed at preparing middle- and short-term programmes for industry. But these are precisely what financial and industrial groups, commercial structures and foreign investors are hugely interested in. At the same time it is not considered that these are realistic sources of funding for scientific programmes and developments. Academy institutes, used to state support, are reluctant to take any notice of them, and rely exclusively on the budget, as they did decades ago [Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, f. 5N, op. 1–3, d. 3343, ff. 5–6].

In this speech, Nazarbayev essentially formulated a new form of state commissioning and a new form of the relationship between the state and science in the absence of any military-industrial complex, and made it clear that 'high-level science' or 'science for science' sake' was beyond the means of the budget of Kazakhstan. From that moment there began a conceptual restructuring of the mechanisms for funding scientific projects. The Ministry of Science and New Technologies (which still existed at that point) was given the task of producing a new accord between industry and research and between research and higher education, and formulating who would be the beneficiary of scientific knowledge and how to make that knowledge

competitive in the new conditions, when the state itself was in a process of transition. The Ministry's other task (perhaps an impossible one) was to pull together the distributed ('rhizomatic') network of the 'grey zone' which it had inherited from the Soviet military-industrial complex, and to convert its scientific and technological potential for the new projects of the independent state. Some of these discussions were reflected in the newspaper *Nauka Kazakhstana*, which was published from 1993 to 2000. The Ministry of Science and New Technologies only existed for four years — two years longer than Abilseiitov was the minister. Over several years of reforms, the main organisation responsible for science in Kazakhstan was redesignated eight times. Besides changes of name (the Ministry of Science and New Technologies, Ministry of Science, Academy of Sciences, Ministry of Science and Higher Education), new ministries were created, were divided or amalgamated, and always with a re-distribution of functions. Eventually the administration of science was entrusted to the Science Committee within the Ministry of Education and Science.

To sum up, within the format of this short piece, all the efforts that have been put into reforming and organising new structural hierarchies and links, it may be noted that of all the elements of the 'grey zone' mentioned above by Abilseiitov, only the Ulba Metallurgical Plant has been reasonably well converted and more or less integrated into the Kazakh economy. The Semipalatinsk military training ground has been closed, and Baikonur has been leased to Russia. All the former research institutes that used to belong to the Academy of Sciences are now structurally part of the Ministry of Education and Science and are financed by grants. The remaining assets of the Soviet military-industrial complex are managed by Kazakhstan Engineering, a joint-stock company founded in 2003.

At the same time, the monumental complex of the buildings of the Academy of Sciences in the centre of Almaty, designed by the well-known Russian architect Alexey Shchusev, remains the locus of nostalgia for the 'high-level' science that once existed and the desired continuity between Soviet and today's science. This is where a number of institutes (including all those for the social sciences and humanities) continue to function, now under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Science. But the real life of this complex, apart from the rent paid by the Ministry of Education and Science, is maintained by the working library and the museums — the Museum of Nature, the Museum of Archaeology, the Kanysh Satpayev Memorial Museum (commemorating the first president of the Academy of Sciences, and occupying his former office), and the Museum of the History of Science in Kazakhstan. The museums and library are managed by the state enterprise Gylym Ordasy, and according to its website

the museums had 105,783 visitors in 2019.[1] This means that both structurally and visually (within public space), the Academy of Sciences has been turned into a museum, and has come to represent the only version of the Soviet science that once existed.

At the very beginning of this short sketch we introduced the metaphor of the 'grey zone' so as to show that the Academy of Sciences is by no means the only history that Kazakh science of the Soviet period has. This metaphor came into being as a result of an analysis of the relations (or lack of them) between the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR, regarded as the flagship of Kazakh science, and the many industrial and military scientific institutions that existed on the territory of Kazakhstan. This metaphor is needed to describe the interstitial, debatable and antagonistic histories (in the plural) within which the formation of Kazakh institutional science in the Soviet period took place.

Archival materials

Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, f. 5N, op. 1–3, d. 3343. Transcript of the speech by N. A. Nazarbayev, President of the Rep. of Kazakhstan, at a plenary session of the National Academy of Sciences of the Rep. of Kazakhstan. 2 February 1994.

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VLADIMIR DAVYDOV

1 Changes in the institutional organisation of scholarship represent a natural process of transformation directed towards an improvement in the quality of research and a rationalisation of its administration. If there is no change in the field of the organisation of academic activity, that can provide the basis for stagnation. The current situation in Russian scholarship is characterised by a gradual transition to a system of temporary contracts. On the one hand, this affects the mobility of researchers and allows them to get new experience in a new place. On the other hand, such a situation wipes out many

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[1] <http://www.gylymordasy.kz/>.

academic schools. In particular, the system of temporary contracts contains many factors that hold back the development of fundamental directions. Many such developments take decades and do not fit into the time-frame of grants. Frequently a three-year grant (sometimes with the possibility of extension) is only enough to sketch out the prospects of research, and finishes with the appearance of some new results which might have been reinforced and developed. When funding runs out, a collective becomes ephemeral and is basically orientated towards the results of individual research and the topics of other ongoing work. Grants and temporary contracts to a great extent allow the scholarly search to be structured. Within such a state of dispersal materials and results are not concentrated at a particular place, but move about together with the scholar and often, particularly when the research topic is changed, remain unwanted. Many projects are orientated towards the collection of databases of various sorts or the processing of field materials, but without an extension of funding the experience and information obtained are only partially made use of.

Temporary posts increase competition among scholars for positions, and make them constantly raise the level of their qualifications. Permanent posts are doubtless 'convenient' for those who occupy them. They also help to 'retain' staff in particular organisations, which allows research to be carried out within longer-term perspectives. Nevertheless, such a system, which is accompanied by lower expectations of qualifications for certain categories of academic staff, may lead to stagnation of research and inertia among those who occupy the said posts. The absence in a number of organisations of any effective mechanisms for assessing the quality of researchers' work, combined with lower requirements, makes these positions practically irreplaceable. The other extreme is a system of performance-related contracts where a given quantity of works in high-rated journals is required of the researcher or teacher, which it is not always possible to publish within the set period. A complete transition to temporary contracts is on the whole convenient for employers and allows them to attract new staff to the organisation. Nevertheless, we should not make absolute judgments about the pros and cons of one form of contract or another. The quality of academic work depends to a large extent on the particular person. There is often a hybrid situation, when a scholar has a permanent post, in which they do the work prescribed by the state, and take part in parallel in various temporary groupings funded by grants.

As the experience of distance working during the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, the physical presence of a scholar at a place of work is not always necessary for productive research. Such practices as the rotation of staff in research groups, and also long-term collaboration between a scholar and an employer, are together

effective components of academic endeavour. A complete rejection of the replacement of research posts, and also the lack of any possibility of preserving an academic school on account of the increase in the terms of work of the members of the collective in a particular organisation, are factors creating obstacles in the way of the development of scholarship. The rotation of researchers, and academic mobility, are essential conditions for the generation of new ideas and increase of innovative potential. The concentration of intellectual resources in a particular place, accompanied by the transmission of experience to members of the younger generation of scholars has great significance for the quality of subsequent academic work. In this sense a combination of temporary and permanent contracts within a single organisation may create fertile soil for academic work. Nevertheless many Russian academic organisations are in need of a substantial review of the contractual obligations of their academic staff. By retaining a system of permanent contracts with the present minimal requirements for attestation of post-holders, a state-financed organisation risks failing to fulfil the requirements imposed by the state.

2 What is happening now in academic life is exactly the same as in other spheres. The basic tendencies of the modern age are digitisation, rationalisation of management and reorganisation. The principles for assessing the results of academic work are changing radically. Accountability for grants, projects and programmes requires publication of articles in 'high-rated' journals or else a set quantity of equivalent units accepted for publication over a limited period of time. The result of such processes is a change in the genre of writing, which is becoming ever more pragmatic. In a number of countries writing a dissertation in the form of a monograph is being replaced by a defence on the basis of published works on a single general topic. This allows an academic to be more competitive in applying for postdoctoral positions, but leads to a change in the style of writing. In practice the works of modern-day scholars are composed under the influence of the need to print relatively short texts, mostly 10–25 pages in length, part of which is taken up by an extensive list of the sources used. The pragmatics of academic life allow researchers to put together odds and ends and publish articles which consist largely of analytical reviews of published work. The basic focus of the articles often shifts from a description and analysis of particular materials collected in the field to a discussion of methodological aspects of the research, accompanied by a large number of details and nuances that often reflect the subjective experience of the author, and not the people whom (s)he is studying. To sum up, large-scale scholarly analyses are practically replaced by the genre of the analytical essay. In this way the pragmatics of the grant referred to above leads first and foremost of a change in the style of writing and

as a result to the dominance of certain genres. As a result the predominant unit of accountability becomes the article and not the monograph. One might say that the dominance of a particular type of writing, or, rather, *la violence de la lettre* [Derrida 1997: 101], is becoming established in scholarship, and that this substantially changes the whole spectrum of the academic output. Above all the 'palpability' of grant accountability, and its comprehensibility to the persons who take decisions about funding (often also relying on the results of review of the projects) is making the genre of the peer-reviewed article fundamental.

In the sphere of assessment of the results of academic activity the idea of symbolic capital [Bourdieu 1980] is being put into effect. The set of indicators for metrics with which the modern scholar deals every day, rank his / her works in a large number of ratings, such as, for example, number of citations, the impact factor of the journals in which (s)he is published, which lets them be compared with the achievements of his / her colleagues. Such ratings and requirements lead to a change in ideas about the prestige of publications in particular editions, as a result of which scholars begin to think pragmatically about where they should 'invest' their ideas. Over recent years summaries of contributions at conferences and articles in collections have been considerably 'devalued', while the demands made of the publications in which scholars have their work printed have increased. The academic landscape is being generally reformatted, as a result of which genres which were usual for the older generation of academics are being gradually excluded from any form of accountability.

Scholarship is a mobile and lively social institution. It has always been changing. Ethical principles have been transformed as well. At any period of change both positive and negative tendencies have been observable. At present it is a positive that, thanks to the growth in requirements for accountability, scholars have begun to think about the quality of the publications in which their work appears. Publication in the new format creates difficulties for many researchers, connected above all with the need to master new genres of writing. This is also the explanation for the large number of 'predatory' publications, that make money by guaranteeing that publications will appear quickly and by a practical absence of any peer review. Under pressure from changing forms, many scholars fall into this trap, and harm their reputations.

During the period of transition, the 1990s and the following decade, requirements for the quality of publications were significantly lower. Nevertheless it is interesting that texts published by ethnographers before metrics were widely introduced (some of which would not stand up to today's criticism and would have been rejected by the

majority of periodicals) now constitute interesting sources containing important ethnographical data. The mechanisms of 'distillation', or the scholarly 'purification' of knowledge on many levels, are constantly changing. To a large extent, following Western models of the attestation of research results, modern scholars aim to write their works relying on discussion with colleagues, and trying in the context of multiple corrections and completions to improve the quality of their processing and analysis of material.

There was a similar practice in the Soviet period. For example, when the book *Narody Sibiri* (*The Peoples of Siberia*) was being written at the end of the 1930s, and scholars from different institutions were involved in its preparation, the chapters they had written sometimes underwent a whole series of discussions at sittings of the Siberian Cabinet of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. The authors received a large number of comments which they had to take into account while completing the work. Their colleagues' comments often depended on their ideological positions [AMAE]. In the course of such discussions and interactions with the editors chapters went through many levels of 'filtration' and 'distillation' and were transformed considerably. The views put forward in the published version of the book reflected the results of the work of many more scholars than those named in the headings, and often had a collective, impersonal character. It sometimes seems that modern scholars are working to quite different principles from their Soviet predecessors. Nevertheless some qualitative components of academic work may be similar at different periods, and we do have things to learn from previous generations of researchers. In this sense, when we speak of the contemporary problems of academic work, it is quite useful to look at examples from the history of scholarship.

One peculiarity of modern scholarship is the scholar's total dependence on technology, such as computer searches for information, automated translation, etc. The internationalisation of scholarship leads to a change in its language. For many people it is unthinkable to work on a modern article without using a vast number of sources that display the author's erudition and the power of his / her search engine. Whereas it used to take years to collect such academic baggage, now much is decided by the searching system. The scholar has to master the technique of swift filtration and processing of information. Technology has a powerful influence on the scholar's thought processes. Modern scholarly texts are often a large quantity of cross-references, a highly complex product of the modern age, while the analysis of the layers of meaning in such texts is reminiscent of archaeological work.

George Ritzer's theory of McDonaldisation, which is perfectly applicable to the analysis of the field of education and science [Ritzer

1996], can be useful in understanding the nature of the work of the modern scholar, pragmatic and orientated towards assessment by metrics. In recent years writing an article has become a technological process involving a large number of actors and technical devices. As in the kitchen, the scholar assembles the necessary 'sauce' and list of ingredients for preparing his / her 'product'. Fieldwork in the customary sense begins to lose its significance. The method of online surveys, which is gathering pace in the current epidemiological situation, substantially changes the idea of the very process of fieldwork. The current situation in social anthropology might be characterised as 'a shortage of field'. Here I agree with Tim Ingold's assessment, 'I do not think we can do anthropology in armchairs' [Ingold 2008: 82], since there must be a balance between the field and the process of its interpretation elsewhere.

Modern scholarship is indeed characterised by a transition to technologies of writing, but the technological nature of the writing is not always correlated with the depth of processing of material. In practice, as was said above, some genres of writing — articles in collections and conference reports — have been devalued. They are not counted in an organisation's accountability and win no points for their authors. Many researchers are refusing to publish in publications without a doi. This all leads to a reformatting of the existing system for evaluating the status of scholarly journals and a redistribution of their symbolic capital. Every publication has its audience, but such a situation affects the quality of articles. Scholars are glad to publish in journals with a high impact factor, indexed in international databases, but some of them will no longer plan to publish in journals that are not included in Scopus or WoS.

3 To a large extent current tendencies in scholarship allow the assessment not so much of the results and innovatory potential of the researcher himself / herself or the quality of his / her work, as the technology of his / her writing and his / her competence in a given field. That young and early-career researchers do not have high indicators is a real problem in the assessment of the results of academic work. The Hirsch index can not only show the quality of academic achievements, but also reflect fashions for particular ideas in scholarship, or how popular or debatable a researcher's works are. In practice, metrics push scholars to write work orientated towards a wider, general audience. If a work is orientated towards a very narrow circle of specialists, it has fewer chances of being cited.

Since 2020 state-financed academic institutions have been tied to the integrated score of publication results (ISPR), which is calculated by a specially developed method. This system has provoked a wave

of discussion amongst scholars. The introduction of this sort of indicator initially had the goal of assessing the quality of research results. The appearance of an integrated score was convenient for the people who take the decisions. Everything done in an organisation is practically reduced to a single numerical indicator. The introduction of such an indicator of results was intended to raise the quality of published work. This is an extremely pressing problem. Many scholars are quite passive in their choice of where to publish, and will publish anywhere that will print them, but are often not ready to submit their articles to high-rated journals, since they cannot count on positive peer review. For many people it is psychologically difficult to get a review that requires major revisions to the text, or to get a rejection. Besides, if there are extensive comments, revision might take a long time, and the grant system imposes a strategy of rapid publication. Therefore the choice of journal is often pragmatic: preference is given to the journal that will print the article more quickly and allow it to be included in the account.

The integrated score was introduced so that authors would try to publish in high-rated journals, because for accountability it is necessary that the journal should have a high rating. In practice a further important component was added that stimulates authors to publish in high-rated journals, making them think about the quartile in which the publication sits. Q1 and Q2 are on everyone's lips now, and have become a requirement for participation in a number of grant competitions. The need to fulfil increased requirements under a performance-related contract (some organisations, for example, demand two or more Scopus-indexed articles a year) or grant agreement makes scholars have recourse to publication in 'predatory' journals. The introduction of the ISPR was intended to make publication in this sort of journal unprofitable for the authors and the organisations where they work.

One innovation in the method by which this indicator is calculated was the fractional score. Many people used to indicate multiple affiliations in their articles, and sometimes such publications were included in the reports of the research work of two organisations at once. The strategy for increasing the organisation's score was the multiplication of temporary contracts, the creation of various centres and laboratories, and the appearance of associated researchers, etc. These tendencies allow for a greater number of colleagues to be included in an institution's report. In the system of fractional scores it becomes disadvantageous for authors to participate in external grants at other organisations, because they have to indicate another affiliation, and the organisation where they are primarily employed will not accept an article with other affiliations in its report. This means in practice that this system requires scholars to increase the number of their publications per reporting period.

It seems to me that the assessment of a scholar's work cannot rely entirely on numerical indicators. The number of articles in Scopus- or WoS-indexed journals may reflect not so much the researcher's innovative potential as his / her conformity to modern methods of evaluating results and his / her skill in adapting himself / herself to the system. The significance of scholarly work can only be assessed by the scholarly community. In this sense the assessment of the results of a scholar's work must rely on qualitative features, which requires the improvement of the institution of expert evaluation, principally by constructing mechanisms for feedback that give scholars the opportunity to receive significant comments about the evaluation of the results of their research.

Abbreviations

AMAE — Archive of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences

Archival materials

Archive of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences. Sessions of the Siberian Cabinet 1938–1940. Protocols. [The documents are undergoing technical processing.]

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MARINA HAKKARAINEN

A colleague of mine, a university professor, once told me that she would not like to begin her academic career today. Looking at her students, especially those who had gone out into the 'wide world', she thought that she would be physically incapable of enduring the race: the endless grant applications, moving from one project to another, and from one country to another. It has become harder to make an academic career...

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Indeed, academic life has changed a great deal in recent years. I do not know whether it has become much harder to work — every time has its own difficulties and opportunities — but it seems that the skillset mastered in times past to build and develop an academic career is losing its value and effectiveness today. We are faced with the fact that changes have been taking place. In my view, they must take place. However, it is important to understand what stands behind the changes and what we would get from them.

Before proceeding directly to the 'Forum' actual questions, I want to contextualise the current academic organisational changes. It has always seemed to me that the universities remained till recently the last islands of extramarket economics in an ocean of total commercialisation. The knowledge that they produced was a bridge joining the present to the past and the future. This knowledge was, of course, historically, culturally, socially and politically conditioned, but ideally it aimed to be independent of last-minute judgments and claimed a temporality distinct from the everyday. Later we find it possible to build something useful and practical in a particular situation here and now on the solid platform of this knowledge. But in future it may be useful to those whom we do not know yet but whom we care about. Adam Smith left his ideas about the wealth of nations to future generations, and we are still making use of them.

The old academic system has its merits from an organisational point of view. It is notably stable: everyone knows their place and his / her prospects within it, and works towards them. I know that in Russian-speaking circles of ethnographers this system is generally criticised behind the scenes for letting people be ineffectual — 'treading water' in theory, repeating 'the same thing' for many years, creating 'descriptive' works, whereas what is expected of effective scholars is analysis, contributions to theory and, by and large, great discoveries. But in my view, this is an undervaluing of the essential activity without which there could be no breakthroughs to great discoveries and theories. Discoveries are only made when all 'strata' of learning are being produced, accumulated and working together in all genres, both oral and written. It cannot be said that the former 'stable and solid' structures do not have their faults. They are too zealous in protecting knowledge and its producers from the outside world, they make the academic community too closed, hierarchical and rigid, separating themselves from the world of 'ordinary people' by their elite role as creators of timeless truth. Neoliberal ideology has done away with 'timeless' knowledge, and has tied academic activity to the imminent problems of today. The result has been an alteration in university structures the world over. The wave of university reforms is sweeping away solidly built bridges and replacing them with flexible structures responsive to neoliberal values and sensitive to the dynamics of markets. But markets are capricious.

It is hard for me to judge the organisation of scholarship in the Russian Academy of Sciences; I have never worked in that system. After my postgraduate studies I worked until recently in Finland. In Finland, with its social democratic traditions, the state ensured that the academic system worked or facilitated the work of the academic system. The state and society gave an 'allowance' for maintaining universities through the tax system, and allowed them academic freedom. Society recognised that there must be such an independent force as the university and academic milieu, and it trusted the universities, considering that they could take care of their own organisation and their own activity without outside interference. Meanwhile global trends in academic life put an end to trust in universities and criticised 'the professors' untrammelled power'. A prolonged university reform began, as a result of which the universities were set upon the road of projects and market relations.

I began my career in research within the project system, and would like to share my impressions. I had the good fortune to work with Laura Assmuth, now Professor of Social and Public Policy at the University of Eastern Finland. Though this took time, she was able to create a smoothly running research team with which she fulfilled many projects. This continuity of the research group was an advantage. Within such continuity the project system seems to me a flexible and effective organisation of work on a specific topic. But as a labile / short-term organisational structure it creates many problems that are systemically reflected in all spheres of academic activity. I shall look at those that I consider important.

The project system, that follows neoliberal values and the market, destroys academic solidarity. Various specialists work on projects: the leaders, the middle rank of researchers, and the junior rank of researchers — students, administrators, IT support and even the café staff. Some of them are formally visible in the project, others are hidden, but ideally all of them should work on the projects for their successful completion collectively and without prejudice. However, in fact it often turns out that each of these parties has its own problems and interests, and its own professional ethics, which can be opposed to each other. The university administration might perceive the research projects as an additional load that hampers the everyday life of the institution and distracting the office from its basic function, which is supporting the educational process. Besides, the projects are all different, there are many of them, and therefore it is difficult to look after them. For their own convenience, administrators strive to formalise and unify them as much as possible. As a rule, research fellows are working on several projects. They are constantly looking for better-paid projects or for a permanent post. This is understandable: they bear the main load of research within the project system, but are the most vulnerable group of professionals,

and at the end of the project they are left 'high and dry'. Students can defer their studies or leave the project. The professor — the leader of the project — has to coordinate all these groups, maintain the effectiveness of their work, and, at the same time, generate more and more income for the university by organising new projects and their funding. Actual research work within the project is an unrealisable dream for its leader. Besides, each of these parties has its own way of doing things and its own professional code. Employment legislation and the administration do not recognise flexible working for research. Therefore, regardless of the specifics, every month a researcher has to fill in a table of man-hours, but formally, not according to the facts. Furthermore, the administration often suspects the 'academics' of misusing funds, even though projects usually have their own funding which they apply by themselves and out of which they pay the university at full cost for organisational support. The researchers in turn sincerely cannot understand why they have to give an account of the number of man-hours when in any case they will be paid exactly what they are supposed to be — there is no overtime. As a rule, they are careful and frugal with the project funds, because their travels and research opportunities in the field depend on it. They are not greatly interested in formal rules of expenditure, and are surprised at the administration's mistrust and bureaucratic monitoring. One could continue the list of contradictions between participants within the project system.

In addition, there has been a recent efflorescence of 'academic Taylorism', in which 'scientific management' by metrics is breaking down. Many research colleagues say that ever more results are demanded of them — lectures, articles, public appearances (both academic and for the wider public) and project applications. Researchers' activities are regulated not so much by office norms and labour discipline as by professional ethics and meritocratic discourses. As a result, they do not work fixed hours, there is no division between work and leisure, and they feel guilty if they have no time to 'do everything'. The writing of endless project applications for topics proposed by funding bodies and university positions is exhausting and leaves no time for a personal life, nor for a more profound understanding of what has already been done. Too much teaching leaves no time for publishing articles, and this undermines their professional rating. With knowledge, but without 'employment', they are looking for the opportunity to institutionalise their knowledge, struggling to survive as an academic employee, passing from one project to the next, moving from one place to another, and those who do not excel at this leave the academy for other sectors or join the ranks of the precariat. The professors are also in a difficult position. Impelled by professional ethics and meritocratic discourse, they are overwhelmed with work to the extent that their

health is imperilled. Meanwhile the universities behave like hardened capitalists, managing their employees by means of limited contracts, bureaucratic means of monitoring and an ethical discourse about the proper use of taxpayers' money. 'Academic Taylorism' results in tiredness, lack of confidence in the future, and frustration.

Such a system of work certainly causes even greater losses of societal resources. When market-orientated enterprises make redundancies, they are said to be aiming to optimise resources. But what might be optimisation in an individual firm might be regarded as an expense on a societal scale. Governed by the goal of making profits, firms throw out those labour resources that seem to them unsuitable for making profits. In other words, they exclude from market exchange those people whose activities might make a contribution to the life of society. Herein the illusion is created that the market is the only forum for exchange. The same thing has started to happen in the academic project system, ever since it started to order its activity with the help of 'the free market' — because the project system is entry into the market, when funding bodies and universities in fact buy the researchers' labour, exchanging the outcome promised in the project application for an agreed sum. When they pay the last instalment, they close further relations. The exchange is effected, and the parties no longer owe each other or the world anything.

As a result, the promised knowledge, in the form of courses, talks and articles is formally produced. Project materials end up in personal computers and in archives. Universities try to retain the project outcomes within their walls as goods produced or received. But the system of short projects does not take into account that the main outcomes of the projects are people and teams. In *The Great Transformation* Polanyi wrote of people engaged in production: 'the alleged commodity "labor power" cannot be shoved about, used indiscriminately, or even left unused, without affecting also the human individual' [Polanyi 2001: 76].

Scholarship, like any other human activity, is not so much knowledge in itself or alienated knowledge for sale. Scholarship is the formation of people and societies through knowledge. People come together for a project, and mobilise their skills, abilities, education, capacities, and emotions, and organise their lives around the project. In addition, they collect material, mobilising other people. As a result of the end of the project, the greater part of its results (which include the researchers' professional development and the relationships between the participants) may be destroyed.

The academic community is faced with three problems which it must solve under present-day conditions. The first is people, the second is means of presenting academic work, and the third is the validation of academic knowledge. What are the prospects for project work?

I think that it can give good results thanks to its flexibility, compactness and tendency towards the decentralisation of work and results. But now, in my view, it often lacks a better integration into stable structures. It also often fails to attain any great congruence with the trajectories of the researchers' lives. Present-day project work operates in different realities simultaneously — between formal procedures and the inspiration of which Max Weber spoke. Formally, if the funders give a researcher a stipend for six months' work, then, by the measure of capitalist exchange, (s)he should work for six months exactly. Whatever the researcher collects over that time, what (s)he reads and inputs into his / her computer, what (s)he says at a conference or a seminar, only that goes into the report. Then the researcher moves on to the next project or to the teaching for which (s)he is supposed to be paid for the next six months, and starts doing everything all over again: collecting material, reading the literature and writing texts. Even if the topics of these projects are close in spirit or in theory, the literature on specific questions is usually different, and one has to choose between the old and the new. There is no time for everything. In the short-term perspective of a single project, such work seems unproductive. The visible results are held back or are put aside indefinitely, and forgotten in the course of new projects. Knowledge from the previous project, it happens, only gets stuck in the computer and in the researcher's head, and might never reach the stage of a scholarly publication. But it does manage to find a place in what gets said at seminars and conferences, in informal discussions, in the mass media, lectures and courses. And all these forms of work are extremely important as scholarly outcomes. Moreover, there is at present a search for new forms for presenting scholarly outcomes, not only to one's colleagues, but also to a wider public. In any event, as a researcher I have had to work in such conditions, and I regard the expansion of the repertoire of the researcher's activity as an important part of accountability. Equally, the project undertaken, that is, the successful competition, the sight of the volume of work and the final result, always inspires. We begin work on a new project with enthusiasm, with renewed strength, we go out into the field, meet new people, absorb knowledge and impressions. At the end of the project we sum up the results of our work: how have we advanced in the topic, and in our own evolution as researchers?

And still, it should not be forgotten that academic research is a long-term activity. Particularly in those areas of knowledge that depend upon contact with people. And particularly anthropology. Anthropology is a 'long science', in which significant results are usually obtained as a result of many years of work. Understanding different people and their interaction, connections, and structures, understanding the context and the changing conditions and then

presenting one's understanding of it to the community — all that takes time. Here it would be possible to achieve efficiency by stringing together a series of projects linked by the trajectory of the development of an idea, of the focus, or the expansion of the topic, the accumulation of material, the development of a theory. It is important for there to be continuity from one project to the next. It often happens that it is only after the second or third project that one has worked up one's material into solid articles for serious journals. In connection with this three problems must be solved. Firstly, it is essential to support people and construct platforms for them from which they can freely associate for projects. These are not only universities, they are other associations that provide infrastructure for projects. Secondly, there must be within the community independent experts and expert structures that provide assessment of academic work and feedback. In this case, in the long-term prospects of project work there is an accumulation of material and experience that results in individual and collective professionalisation, which assists in the construction of long production lines for academic knowledge. Therefore it seems to me that project work gives good results if it is based at a university on a permanent basis. Thirdly, a dialogue and a trusting relationship with the outside world must be established. Otherwise, scholarship loses people and is not guaranteed any support from the wider public. And scholarly outcomes without people and in isolation from society have no value.

References

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NATALIA KOVALYOVA

1 My remarks below elaborate on the first question of the 'Forum' regarding the institutional organisation of research. The observations I offer stem from my experience in American universities (with a short stay at University College Dublin, UCD) but the patterns I discuss are compatible to those emerging in other contexts as well. My overall thesis is not new. Changes in the academic world are driven by the market forces allowed to restructure universities in the name of excellence and efficiency. While many elements and processes that make academic research undergo transformation, I will use the rise of interdiscip-

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linary research and funding as a cross-section to see the market forces at work in academia.

To begin, a short side note on *neoliberalism* as a driving force behind many changes in academia. Neoliberalism is a theoretical / philosophical perspective that holds free markets to be the best way to organise practically everything in the world. It places private property rights centre stage and applies the market logic to reorder all relationships accordingly. Many — if not all — changes and reforms in education, health care, social security are driven by the market logic imposed on these spheres by the proponents of neoliberal measures. Following the market imperative, universities and research centres stop being seen as spaces to nurture curiosity, and are cast as corporations whose goal is to generate income by offering a product for which there is a high demand on the markets. Consequently, in their newly acquired identities as customers, those buying educational services no longer attend classes to socialise, mature, and learn how to think but instead to acquire marketable skills leading to gainful employment postgraduation.

Notably, the academic world proudly spoke about itself as a free market of ideas for quite some time but did not emphasise monetary compensation to the producers of popular ideas and arguments. State sponsorship (that is, federal funding) of academic research, fuelled until recently by the determination to prevail in various wars (including the Cold War), was not widely discussed and was largely taken for granted. But as the scariest enemies receded and the market logic strengthened (buttressed by the demise of Soviet socialism), the cost-benefit shake-up arrived on campuses, just as it did on the factory floor, the corporate meeting room, and the government office.

The old manner in which universities and academic research centres produced knowledge came under attack. To survive in the new circumstances, they had to find a way to earn their keep, so to speak, a need even more pressing as their raison d'être of guardians of truth and values articulated for the past several centuries lost its persuasive stance. Yet, the discussion of what governs intellectual life in this new world of total datafication and disruptive innovation was not cancelled. Instead, it retreated to the backroom, far removed from the Tower, which was now concerned with an ever sleeker delivery of content (formerly known as teaching) to ever more demanding consumers (formerly known as students) in order to obtain and maintain high rankings and to attract more investors (also known as partners).

This new university submitted to the logic of the market increasingly evaluates its academic 'workers' on their output and contributions to the bottom line. Published research, preferably in high-impact journals in their respective fields, supplies a useful metric of prestige

to the university and boosts its ranking. Projects sponsored by large grant-making agencies cover the expenses of current and future research. Visible go-to experts among faculty acquire a celebrity status and attract future students. To meet the bar thus set, academics are expected to be entrepreneurial: not only to seek answers to important questions but also to pitch their research to sponsors; not only to carry out research and make sense of the findings but also to demonstrate its impact; not only to generate ideas but also to generate a following on social media platforms. In other word, they are expected to be outstanding in everything, with immediately visible results that translate into the competitive advantage of a home institution.

The onset of such working conditions has been slowly advancing for quite a while, and the alarm notifying researchers about the creeping corrosion of an academic edifice has sounded so many times that it has become a constant background feature in academia. One development that reflects the recent turbulence of the foundational value system in the university is interdisciplinarity, which I shall turn to now.

Interdisciplinarity

The advancement of interdisciplinary research on the academic terrain has met mixed responses. Battles over methodology aside, interdisciplinary scholars often find themselves at the forefront of the neoliberal disruption of many established practices. In fact, interdisciplinarity may be usefully examined as the expression of neoliberal forces.

Most importantly, interdisciplinary scholarship runs against the division of academic labour that locks experts in the silos of their disciplines. Interdisciplinarity thrives on and is congruent with cross-pollination of ideas. Thanks to this feature, it effectively highlights stagnant areas unreceptive to outside ideas. It also demonstrates the inadequacy of individual disciplines for a single-handed generation of solutions to many contemporary problems. Of course, the latter might be a testament to the complexity of contemporary problems, but it is also an invitation for a triangulation of resources and expertise from a variety of disciplines. What complicates an interdisciplinary approach and what puts up numerous hurdles on its adoption and progress is the knowledge-making practices specific to each individual discipline. Academic disciplines have spent centuries drawing boundaries to differentiate one from the other, aiming to carve out their objects of analysis in ways amenable to their methods, and to establish conventions by which to accept new knowledge as contributing to the theoretical framework(s) of a given discipline.

Following this route, disciplines claimed their authority; scholars developed their professional identities as, say, anthropologists or mathematicians, with finer gradations of specialisation in the subject area (for instance, a Shakespearian scholar vs. an Americanist specialising in twentieth-century U.S. foreign policy). Disciplines — and academic departments as their campus homes — also accepted the responsibilities of teaching students and granting them degrees, thus replicating themselves in their graduates.

Interdisciplinarity — stemming from the need to pull together resources and diverse expertise in order to address urgent issues — does not do well in terms of these coordinates. Its straddling of several fields keeps it on the academic fringes as the centre holds, and interdisciplinary scholars fight an uphill battle for recognition and promotion in their home departments unless, in most successful cases, they belong to those rare units on campus that claim interdisciplinarity as their own and have their own majors (or, failing that, offer dual-major opportunities).

To make a successful career in interdisciplinary research is no small feat. And the reason is lodged not in the conservatism of the ivory tower and the tenure and promotion committee, but in the very stamp of market thinking born by interdisciplinarity. To reiterate, in the world full of problems that have resisted solutions for decades and shaken by new crises erupting almost on a daily basis, it is impossible to find a polymath equally competent, say, in chemistry, poetry, and government, who can trailblaze a path towards a plausible solution. Complex problems mushrooming around us call for interdisciplinary teams. But those teams are short-lived. Once the project's objectives are achieved and a solution is found or, at a minimum, proposed, the team is dissolved because a new crisis is looming calling for a unique assemblage of skills, experiences, and expertise to best address it. Enter academic contingency and project work that feeds on grants.

Grant-making agencies

While gifts and donations to the university are often solicited from private individuals, prestigious grants come from philanthropic foundations and governments. Skipping the details of financial arrangements, to navigate which universities establish special units (offices of development and of sponsored projects), I would like to emphasise the links between universities and the state: federal grants undermine the idea of free and independent intellectual pursuits; a piper and his / her paid-for tune is a more accurate description of researchers whose work is supported by grants.

The entrepreneurial researcher that universities seek to have on their payroll not only conducts high-quality cutting-edge research but

also — and almost as importantly — attracts (grant) money to fund such research and to support their research team. The pressure on scholars to bring in money is mounting and has long changed from a 'nice thing to have on your cv' to a requirement for tenure and promotion, especially at research-heavy institutions. But universities are not nudging scholars to prominence via grant applications. As corporations (which they have become), they seek to secure new income streams. Indirect costs written into grant budgets constitute such a stream, as universities routinely absorb up to a half of the dollar amount in a grant award to cover indirect costs of a research project (the use of facilities, utility bills, etc.). My current school, for instance, takes 49% (non-negotiable) of the grant award that it helps administer.

Another aspect of the market logic in research organisations is apparent in setting directions for future research. Federal agencies and large grant-funding bodies do not give out money out of the goodness of their hearts, nor are they moved by some charitable goal. Funding research projects, they want to see a 'return on investment'. They might also want to see the difference their money makes and feel good about themselves helping that difference materialise. They strategically identify areas worth investing in in order to beat the competitors. For instance, Ireland's largest university, UCD (my former school), and the national funding agency, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), are currently seeking to fill thirteen leadership positions in areas identified as strategic: manufacturing and bio-processing; information and communication technology; connected health; agrifood; and energy. Successful candidates will each receive five million euro in funding over five years.

In addition to this close cooperation between the university and the state on directing research efforts, and selecting top managers to oversee those efforts, specific conditions set for individual grants also reveal the priorities of sponsoring organisations and their wish to be academic movers and shakers. The Irish Research Council[1], for instance, to continue with the Irish theme, is keen on sponsoring collaborative research, often with industry and non-profit partners, and fostering connections between researchers locally and internationally. A purely theoretical project that does not involve partners has a slim chance of being supported. Moreover, a partnership cannot be merely hypothetical or prospective. The message from the state about its priorities and about the direction it wants the researcher to proceed is quite clear: focused areas of inquiry, a shorter route to implementation (hence, a direct involvement of partners in the project from its inception), pooling resources and matching

[1] <http://research.ie/>.

grants to fund a project, quicker monetarisation of the results. The notion of a wide and broad exploration fitting the name of the university and equal tending to all projects has stopped making sense.

Another illustration of a sponsoring agency's involvement in restructuring academic work comes from digital humanities (DH) grants by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). As anyone even briefly acquainted with DH projects knows, DH is a team sport and relies on partnerships, at the very least, between content experts and technology specialists. The ACLS however imagines DH projects as doing more than triangulating expertise. It nudges researchers to form connections between larger universities and smaller colleges which might not be able to carry infrastructural costs associated with DH projects and their maintenance afterwards. Curiously, the ACLS does not encourage DH projects with a pedagogical bent, that is, the type of projects that could train a new generation of DH scholars and, therefore, help mould DH into an academic discipline of its own. Instead, the thrust of their efforts is on disrupting the way scholarship has been done by introducing new methodology, 'hacking' the old disciplinary habits by building new partnerships and networks that may bypass departmental silos, encouraging new forms and settings in which scholarship is produced (no longer in the solitude of a library reading room but in an experimental lab or in a studio), and supporting project work with concrete deliverables.

But an aspiring researcher passionate about DH will soon discover that the ACLS is not really interested in breakthrough. Instead, it wants a) an existing project (with an existing data set) that has already got some traction in terms of publications, reviews, and user's metrics and b) an established scholar as a PI on the project.[1] Looking at the output section of the previously sponsored projects profiled on the ACLS website, it is hard not to question the scarcity of publications from teams of many established scholars and a tendency to limit their dissemination channels to conference presentations.

In accord with the entrepreneurial vision of scholarship, grant-awarding agencies frequently require specific plans for disseminating the project results. While they rarely specify how those outcomes are to be distributed or insist on, say, the conference presentations as a major mode of reporting them that are so much loved by traditional scholars, the burden of inventing new channels and new routes of dissemination falls on the research teams and, frankly speaking, they often fall into the conventional rut of publishing an

[1] <https://www.acls.org/programs/digital-extension/>.

edited volume of papers delivered at a conference organised to promote the project findings. At most, such a volume might be uploaded to an institutional repository and made accessible freely and openly.

Closing my discussion on changes in the research infrastructure on contemporary university campuses, I want to remind us about Bill Reading's observation, made in the early 1990s, that the university has long abandoned its mission of teaching students how to think and that it no longer cares about values. Instead, it has become a corporation in business of information rather than knowledge — producing, exchanging and consuming it, by other businesses, governments, and its customers. While we may lament that the old idea of university is indeed 'in ruins', we should pay attention to the actually existing university — a 'modern day behemoth' (Harvey) predicated on economic competitiveness delivered to it by its research units.

ALEXANDER KOZINTSEV

1 The questions asked are more to do with the situation 'around scholarship' than 'in scholarship', that is, not so much with the academic landscape as such, as with the climate in which it exists. Frankly, I am less and less worried about this. It is the changes connected with scholarship itself that seem much more interesting, particularly those connected with the dissemination of scholarly information. None of this depends on institutes, departments, grants or contracts, although, as with grants, it is personal initiative that comes first.

From my type of activity and the nature of my character I have been, and remain, a loner and an anarchist. For me it is, essentially, only the form and volume of bureaucratic accountability that depends on the infrastructure I belong to and the metamorphoses it is undergoing. Fortunately I do not need any equipment and I have long been able to do without going on expeditions or even prolonged visits to other institutions. In my youth, it is true, I travelled quite a lot, thanks to Mr Soros, and the RFBR,[1]

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[1] Russian Foundation for Basic Research [Eds.].

and the RSFH.[1] Under Gaidar's parsimonious government, grants were necessary simply to survive and feed one's family.

In those days, grants were also necessary to overcome our isolation. I acquired my first computer in Tokyo in 1989 out of a grant that I unexpectedly received from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS). But the Internet and email were only just being introduced at that time. Now the situation is radically different, and theoretically there should be nothing left of our isolation. But its aftermath is still not put behind us. The gigantic possibilities of the Internet are underestimated.

I shall say something subversive: virtual communication over the web is now on such a scale that to a large extent it has made conference attendance unnecessary (unless, of course, it is a pretext for meeting one's close friends). The received opinion is that conferences are as much an integral part of the life of an academic as concerts in that of a musician. But at the age of thirty-two Glenn Gould gave up concert performances to concentrate on studio recordings. Everyone has their own style, and the key to success is to avoid clichés. Yes, there is no substitute for live communication, but I am speaking now of the academic efficiency of such meetings. If that is all we have in mind, why do we need conferences if we have such fora as Academia.edu? No sooner have you exhibited your work there than it is being read and downloaded by everyone interested in the subject the world over. How many of them? I have more than 1,400 subscribers on Academia (among whom close colleagues, obviously, form a minority). It matters to me not a jot whether they belong to 'stable and solid' organisations. Scholarship is the relationships between ideas, and not between institutions, whatever Bourdieu, Latour and all their forerunners in the vulgar sociologist camp may have written about it. It is not the place that adorns the man, but the man the place.[2]

All your subscribers on Academia.edu learn about your latest works immediately and can download them. The average number of downloads from my page is thirty to forty a day, and when you upload something substantial, and in English, there might be a hundred, or two hundred, or more. There were more than 3,500 viewings

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1 Russian Scientific Fund for the Humanities [Eds.].

2 In the Internet age this proverb needs to be formulated even more forcefully, because there may not be a 'place' (an affiliation, a post, and so on) at all. As an example I shall cite two very authoritative bloggers on genetics whose affiliation is unknown and who have no printed works. One of these is David Wesolowski, who writes under the pseudonym Davidski. The other conceals even his name, and is know only by his pseudonym Dienekes Pontikos. I cannot bring myself to call them dilettantes. To my mind they are professionals in the most exact sense of the word (see: [Callaway 2010]). What they do indeed lack is the form of scholarship, and — horribile dictu! — in the heat of the argument Davidski does not even avoid obscene language. Personally I am quite capable of abstracting myself from this and citing him in print just like more respectable colleagues.

of one of my publications last year. I know many of my readers by name, since fortunately the site allows us this possibility. If we choose, we can write in the messaging section to the author of a work and say what prompted us to download it, and what we think of it. Today I got such a response from someone I do not know, and that was very pleasant. Each of us, in turn, can ask a colleague for an electronic version of his / her work. Hardly anyone ever refuses, even if it concerns a book. One can also discuss draft versions. Everyone invited by the author can take part in the discussion (if they want), and those who have not been invited can send a request. The dimensions of our virtual community are boundless.

Where can you find such an extensive and ideally focused public at any congress, even the most international ones? And indeed, more than one public, for a person can be involved with a lot of topics which are far removed from each other. If it were possible to find it (supposing the improbable), how many man-hours of conversation at the conferences themselves and after them could we count on? But on the Internet there are no plenary sessions, no sections, no regulations, no need to rush from one section to another or stand mournfully beside one's poster... It is a blessing for anarchists like me. One can argue until nightfall; one can argue at night as well. Imagine what would have happened if Socrates had lived to the Internet age! Arguments can last for days, weeks and months. The discussion of my articles on the Генофонд.рф site began in November last year, and the latest, ninety-ninth, post is dated to May this year. At a certain point in the discussion I stopped taking part in it, having found out everything I wanted to, but my opponents continue to argue with each other — isn't that a wonderful thing?

And what about Zoom lectures? I never used to use them, but it's an ill wind that blows nobody good — what a convenient mode of communication! You save the time spent going to the college, and the time spent coming back (with a number of changes and the risk of catching, if not COVID, then a more modest species of flu). I was recently making arrangements with my students about the date of our next discussion. It turned out that everybody could manage Saturday, 9 May. A holiday? So what? You can go and have a drink after your studies. Who says that you can only celebrate on a holiday, and only work on a working day? The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath! Is such a thing possible under the normal regime, when everything is fixed to a particular date, time and lecture theatre? Incidentally, on 20 March, on the eve of full lockdown, I read a popular public lecture on emotions (to an almost empty hall, but it was recorded) during Brain Awareness Week at the First St Petersburg Medical University.[1] I may not be a Glenn

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXwZ-QxZJtQ&feature=youtu.be>.

Gould, but still, how is such a virtual lecture worse than the usual sort? In my opinion it is better, because the listener can stop the video at any moment so as to examine a slide.[1]

I shall go further: the Internet has made it much less necessary to go to libraries.[2] The efficiency of information gathering in our day is striking. The older literature is digitised to a significant extent. As for new literature... Every day you find a mass of academic circulars in your inbox. Daily lists of books on psychology, archaeology, anthropology, linguistics, *Science Daily*, *Medium Daily Digest*, *EurekAlert*, weekly issues of *Science*, *Nature*, *Scientific Reports* on biology, etc. All this needs to be looked at from beginning to end. It takes up a lot of time, but otherwise your horizon shrinks irreversibly, and your competence decreases.

Of course, all you can find out from the sources mentioned is that such-and-such an article or book has been published, not a thorough knowledge of what it says (at best, a detailed abstract). Previously, that was all that could be done for the time being, while the books and journals themselves would eventually reach the library. But two splendid sites have made this a thing of the past. Sci-Hub satisfies our need for the latest articles almost entirely. There are, according to today's data, over eighty million of them freely available there. Library Genesis covers about two thirds, if not three quarters of our needs for new Western monographs, and partially Russian ones. As for the latter, we have at our disposal Twirpx, Klex, Koob and the results of the tireless copying activity of the members of the many Internet communities on VK and Facebook.

Not long ago I was interviewed by the young Alexandra Elbakyan, the creator of Sci-Hub, whose supporter and admirer I am. (I do not approve of her hooligan behaviour, but, we recall, Esenin was a hooligan too.) I cannot imagine what I would do without her site — in any case I would not have been able to write any of my works to contemporary standards. I agree with her that electronic piracy, if

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[1] In my enthusiasm for the technological achievements of 'the capital city', and, moreover, miming inverted commas during the lecture, I position myself as the most provincial of provincials [Sokolov, Titaev 2013: 257]. I shall, however, remark that the manifestly unrealisable pretensions of some of our fellow countrymen to judge the provincial-indigenous system from the point of view of the capital is the worst form of indigenism. I shall refrain from any more forceful expression, although, as of old, there is no level of servility that will win recognition from Europe (in the broad sense). Provincials are dismayed by their own backwardness, and try with all their might to overcome it. Indigenes are pleased with everything since it is the existing state of affairs that provides their raison d'être. The sociological difference between self-satisfaction and schadenfreude is only that in the first case the reference group coincides with the membership group, and in the second it doesn't.

[2] Real ones, not virtual ones! And I am speaking only of my own field. Not long ago the great comparativist Allan Bomhard made his huge library (16 Gb) available to everybody on Google Drive. Did he infringe copyright by so doing? Formally, yes. I was somewhat surprised to see there not only work that I had already published, but also that which was due to come out this year (the journal editor had sent it to Bomhard for review). Yes, if we are to observe the letter of the law, that infringes my rights, and the journal's, but what author would protest at that sort of piracy?

that is what it should be called, is a great benefit to scholarship. Theft is immoral, because stolen property becomes unavailable to its owner, but here everything remains in place. Publishers' income is reduced a bit, but scholars (who are not paid by the journals, although these exist thanks to them, and thanks to the taxpayers whose money funds scholarship) profit by it, and even by law they have the right to distribute their articles among their colleagues. One wise editor, when I asked permission to upload one of my articles from his journal to Academia.edu, replied 'It is usually best if I simply don't know what you do with it.' And yet his journal is so preoccupied with covering its expenses that, unlike the vast majority of others, it does not attach a doi to its articles, for where there is a doi, there is Alexandra Elbakyan. This irritates our academic bureaucrats: isn't it clear to everyone that an article without a doi is no article? But another journal recently demanded that one of my colleagues should withdraw his publication from Academia.edu, although copyright there belongs only to the authors. True, this is the only such case that I know.

Sci-Hub and LibGen are periodically blocked by Roskomnadzor.[1] From whom? Are there many Internet users who do not know about the Tor browser, which practically every student has heard all about? It would be no bad thing to remind the blockers of these lines from a poem by Aleksey Konstantinovich Tolstoy addressed to censor M. N. Longinov:

> Misha, give up your deterrents,
> Unafraid the scholars talk,
> And you will not dam their currents
> With your silly little cork.

To this must be added the perfectly legal electronic MSU Library, the Russian National Library, the CyberLeninka, Google Books and other legal resources, here and in the West. Andrey Nikitin-Perensky's electronic library ImWerden, in Munich, is a real treasure trove for historians, literary specialists and lovers of Russian literature (including émigré literature) in general. Last year, without infringing anyone's copyright but my own, I sent him the electronic version of my edition of Leonid Pinsky's tractate, and now I regularly receive the accessions lists of this collection. Thanks also to Yakov Krotov for free access to his electronic library and for putting my book and two of my articles there.

There was a time when we were cut off from the rest of the world. Now, when the words *special holdings*[2] mean nothing to students, the only problem is where to find the time to read it all.

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1 The Russian Internet monitoring authority [Eds.].

2 In Soviet libraries, the term for those items that were not available to the generality of readers [Trans.].

The time has come to answer your question: what should today's academic centres be like? I suppose, the sort where the directorate does not concern itself with whether their colleagues come to work on schedule, go to conferences, are members of learned societies, organising committees, academic councils, examining commissions and editorial boards, whether they are in charge of grants, and so on down the performance indicators, but rather with whether their output carried any weight. If it does, then academic schools — not official ones, virtual ones — will, with time, come into being of themselves.

2 Grants and contracts are essential in the early stages of one's career. It is quite reasonable to give people who have received a higher degree and been appointed to a post a probationary period, perhaps a very long one, during which they must in every way demonstrate their talent and industriousness, after which they get (or do not get) tenure, as in the USA, join the Professur, as in Germany, or something of the sort. It is possible (and this seems to be the way things are going) to choose a different path and turn us all, irrespective of age, experience and prestige, into eternal graduate students and postdocs. This does impose discipline, but...

Long-term planning? Yes, but only if the topic is formulated sufficiently broadly. How does anyone know what they will want to do tomorrow? Joint a megaproject to study mobility? Very tempting, but there is a time for everything. You were excited by migration yesterday, but today you have conceived an interest for emotions, say. Where do you fit in, and how? In my time, when my studies did not fit in anywhere at all, I decided to plan my own individual research topic. No sooner said than done; I got a topic, and the funders were sympathetic. But it is clear that all this demands accountability, and besides, it is ridiculous to be one's own supervisor, one has to engage assistants. But I don't need any assistants, I am of the same breed as Davidski and Dienekes.

Once, while I was still actively engaged in physical anthropology, I invented a quite effective trait battery. But, having proved that it was useful for reconstructing ancient migrations, having published a book and trained some pupils, I left it for others to gather new harvests in that field. Now my colleagues and their pupils are continuing what I began and pursuing their own topics, and I switched to questions that are more relevant for me, and then took another turning, and so on.

This might be called frivolity, but in my mental lexicon that word is filed near to 'freedom'. It may be said that a strategy of this sort, which I have called moving perpendicularly to life, is a sure way to achieve nothing in life. I will say, more cautiously, that it is a hard way to achieve anything; Alberti, who said that a person could do whatever (s)he liked if (s)he wished, lived in the beautiful age of the

Quattrocento, when nobody knew anything about research topics. What is the way out? In my view, it would be best to make research topics and grants as broad and flexible as possible, in which case long-term planning will be no problem either. For example: 'Man: his origins, unity and diversity, and also his virtues and excellence.' I am joking, although a renaissance formulation of that kind would suit me down to the ground. The time frame? The rest of my life — which is not all that long.

But now it seems that we have decided to go in the opposite direction. Yet another antirecord has been broken in the pandemic: now that we are all sitting at home, we are required to submit weekly reports. In principle one could report every day, but will that make us work better and faster? I doubt it: in my own case, perhaps, I shall experience an uncharacteristic tendency to shirk academic activities — it was not for nothing that Pavlov described the freedom reflex. And now I shall proceed to the most exciting question.

3

Since the results of institutes' and universities' academic work are made up of individual indicators, and since, I repeat, it is not the place that adorns the man, but the man the place, I shall speak only of how the work of each of us is evaluated. Metrics indicators give only a very approximate and sometimes distorted idea of the productivity of academic work. The wider the academic community that represents a given subject area, the more readers, ceteris paribus, and, correspondingly, citations you will have. But those who love mountain paths cannot count on many companions, and here, as we know, it is not always easy to tell defeat from victory.

For metrics, talent and industriousness are not only insufficient, they are also unnecessary. It is the ordinary members of large virtual interdisciplinary groups headed by a world-renowned academic star who feel most at their ease in terms of accountability, whatever their actual role. To be a permanent participant in international mega-projects whose results are published in *Science* and *Nature*, no less, with dozens of authors, is, in terms of 'raw-material scholarship' (a variety of 'provincial scholarship'), the surest way to achieve a lot of citations. If success is measured in Hirsch units and journal quartiles, then, thanks to the international division of labour, any postdoc on such a team will quickly achieve impressive results. Never mind that their only function is to provide raw materials and their technical description, they will still be rewarded with full (from a metrics point of view) co-authorship.

It is very easy for an administrator to raise Hirsch scores under such a system. It can happen that their most cited work (more accurately, where they named as a co-author) was not only not written by them, but has no relation to their academic interests. Sometimes there are several such works at the top of a person's bibliography in the

Russian Science Citation Index, and only works of this kind in the Web of Science. This situation also suits the Western co-authors, more accurately the real authors, since it depends on the administrator whether they will get any more material. The administrators sometimes complain that they were not even shown the manuscript before it was sent to the press. 'Oh, sorry,' say his / her co-authors, 'next time we'll certainly show you.'

And here is an opposite example. I have already mentioned my work in Japan, when not only was the material that I was studying provided by the people who had invited me, but they paid the expenses of my trip very generously even though I had not even thought of applying to the JSPS for a grant, they had invited me themselves. The article that resulted from the work was immediately published, without a single change, in the journal of the Japanese Anthropological Society (and writing it was, it seems, the only thing that I was obliged to do under the terms of the grant agreement). I published an article using different methods to process the same material in the USA. In the Web of Science these two articles are at the top of the list of my most cited publications. Why did my Japanese colleagues agree in advance to the role of 'providers of raw material', why did they not include in the agreement a point obliging me to make them co-authors? If I say that they did not need to, I shall name the effect, not the cause. The reason was that although human dignity, unlike citations, cannot be measured in any units, in a certain system of values it counts for a hundred times more.

Returning to citations, which metrics base is to be trusted? If we are orientated on the Web of Science, as we are urged to be at the moment, we must publish only in English. Am I ready for that? Linguistically yes, psychologically no, though I write in that language more and more often. I have published ten works in the West since 2014, including six major articles and three reviews (plus English-language articles in Russian publications). Not one of my works in Russian from the list in the Web of Science, if we are to believe that database, has ever been cited. True, there are dashes instead of zeroes, which evidently means that the corresponding citations have not been tracked. So the message to those who keep their noses to the wind is that it is not enough to publish in English, you have *not* to publish in Russian, so as not to waste your time. No geopolitical configuration will make me agree with that. Nor will I agree that my Hirsch, say, on Google Scholar is inadequate because it takes into account both the Russian-language part of my output and my reading public. This public is very dear to me, particularly when it comes to my work in the humanities.[1]

[1] My book on laughter, which was published in Russia, provoked lively debates, but only my very worst students complained that they could not understand it. Many readers wrote to me personally to express

Whether official commissions are any better than metrics I do not know. There are many pitfalls here too, administrative resources for example. We are bewitched by *The Hamburg Score*, Shklovsky's story of the wrestling matches where only personal qualities counted, and unfairness was excluded on principle. But how is that to be achieved in our sciences? In what units is authority measured? I honestly don't know. But I do firmly believe that 'There is an unshakable scale of values Above the dreary errors of the ages.'[1]

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1 It goes without saying that the results of the work depend first and foremost (but not always) on the principal grant-holder, who assigns the work and records the results. But, honestly, I do not see much point in temporary short-term (under five years) work groups, although I have participated in the work of several of them over the last few years. More often than not they keep people afloat who would do better to abandon scholarship for some other form of academic or non-academic activity. In practice we are seeing (as we have for twenty years or so) an absolute over-production of graduate students in relation to the number of possible jobs for them. The doors

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their approval, or else their indignation. The expanded English version, published in the USA, received a few favourable reviews in the press, but there was practically no personal contact with readers. Both versions are written in ordinary conversational language, I would even say in the style of popular science. Of course it is not a matter of innate qualities, but of a disinclination, acquired over decades of hegemonism, to take notice of anything emanating from outside the anglophone world. I cannot help quoting a conversation between two leading American specialists in the theory of the comic, a philosopher and a linguist, of whom the latter, publicly but not in the presence of the former, recounted it at a conference. 'Is it normal that you don't understand a single word?' asked the philosopher, meaning one of my English works. To which the linguist, (an emigrant from the USSR and a pupil of V. A. Zvegintsev) acidly replied 'Yes, it's perfectly normal,' meaning not an impersonal 'you', but a second-person one. But to me he said, 'Sasha, you are a wrecker and saboteur,' which showed that he had understood it completely and gave me great pleasure, since I really had tried not to leave a single stone of his theory standing.

[1] The beginning of a poem by Osip Mandelstam [Trans.].

to postgraduate study are open, one might say, flung wide, because the production of graduate students is encouraged by the university academic system. However, this system deliberately keeps quiet about the fact that with luck one in fifty graduate students in Germany might become a professor, that is, the only person in the university system who is guaranteed a permanent post. More like one in a hundred. It is very often good students who do not want to enter the world of real work immediately who enter postgraduate studies. However, postgraduate studies are in principle different from undergraduate work. They require initiative at the level of choice of subject and methods, significant independent work, and the ability to realise one's own ideas, rather than guessing what the lecturer wants to hear. Therefore, many postgraduates do not complete their studies simply because they cannot write anything satisfactory by themselves and are not used to systematic independent work, or to serious criticism of their work that is so different from the encouraging rhetoric of their lecturers during their undergraduate years. Still, if one regards postgraduate studies as a real education, as opposed to modern university courses which teach everything and nothing and are incapable of providing society with qualified specialists (that is what graduates become in their postgraduate studies or at the establishment where they have got a job), it may not be so bad to have so many postgraduates. But then when they have finished they should go and work as junior academic staff in museums and libraries, grammar school teachers, editorial staff in the mass media or officials in local government.

However, the wide zone of temporary posts, starting with postdoctoral posts, hourly-paid lecturers or lecturers on short-term contracts, temporary posts in research groups, temporary posts in the administration of the faculty or of a project, gives postgraduates the illusion that all is not lost. Meanwhile project leaders get a large amount of cheap but mostly incompetent manpower, ready to work to establish their reputation in 0.4, 0.5, 0.6, 0.75 or 0.8 of a post. A full-time post is the reward for those who are particularly valuable, or supertolerant of the sort of dirty work that nobody wants to do (communications within the university, for example), or are valued for some other specific qualities. The result is a sort of 'workhouse' of eternal postdoctoral or grant-supported posts which inevitably, in the course of ten or twelve years, bring a significant proportion of young specialists to the necessity of leaving their given field, because it is impossibly to live for long like that, to support one's family or to have any long-term financial commitments. Obviously, anyone who has less than a full post looks for supplementary work, and this most often affects productivity. During the past year two German colleagues whom I know well, just such holders of temporary posts, about forty years old with families, both authors

of monographs and of publications in respectable journals, have abandoned the path of historical research and gone into the IT industry. Not because it was better paid, but because it was stable work.

Furthermore, a significant amount of time during work on the standard three-year (and even more so on the frequent two-year) contracts is taken up with the need to write new job applications and the six months to a year that it takes for them to be evaluated. In practice, when someone gets a new job, (s)he does nothing for the first six to twelve months: (s)he moves house and settles in, tidies up unfinished business from his / her previous topic, acquaints himself / herself with his / her new one and reads up on the literature. Then (s)he has a year (or in reality less) in which to work, during which (s)he really gets into the project, but after that, instead of being engaged on the project, (s)he is preparing applications for the next round of temporary employment. In the time left over from that, (s)he writes the article or chapter in the collective monograph which is supposed to justify his / her three years of activity with his / her left foot, and takes another trip (if the research involves fieldwork). Of course this is not enough time for the article, and (s)he finishes it in his / her next post. Thus on the whole such a system of 'working on projects' turns out an endless stream of people who cannot concentrate on any topic and study it properly, and cannot write and cannot learn to write, because that also requires time and ability. When the team breaks up after a short time, that also to a significant degree destroys the established personal and professional connections that have been built up in the process of 'settling in', and renders meaningless all those endless team meetings, negotiations and moving about that took place in the early stage of the project (team-building, so to speak), and frequently cost a significant part of its overall budget.

There are cases when a young specialist has a permanent mentor, his / her former supervisor for example, who provides him / her with work which is to some extent permanent. This is the de luxe variant, which allows more or less systematic academic activity within a relatively stable group attached to a university or research centre. This is practically a reprise of the old system when a supervisor could appoint colleagues to permanent posts or long-term contracts and part with them when the need arose.

The system of temporary contracts also breeds predators, whom I encountered a few years ago and whose activities I am now forced to observe. These are tight-knit groups of 'temporary collectives' (I know three such) who use their connections among the ideologically like-minded either to insert themselves into new projects, or to receive grants that have been lobbied for on behalf of these

groups. They are fluent in the 'up-to-date' terminology fashionable among those who award and operate grants, and socialise splendidly in the professional milieu, being represented at all the major conferences and other events, but in the end they produce junk texts in the form of reports or do not produce any at all. Furthermore, these groups take advantage of the temporary nature of their contracts and the extra-territorial nature of modern academic life in their efforts to receive several grants at once and fulfil them with texts based on the same material. For example, three grants are received in three different countries from local grant operators (i.e. universities and research institutes) for the work of a group of five people for the current two years on the same fashionable subject, on the basis that in the end each member of the group will write one article. Part of the group undertakes a short expedition or some other form of easy, superficial collection of material. Finally, long after the expiry of all the funding body's deadlines (by which time everyone's nerves are on edge), two (sloppily written) articles are submitted for each project, each signed by several members of the group. The grant operator, though not pleased with the situation, is reluctant to make a fuss, since that would harm its own reputation in the eyes of the funding body, and it would have to return money that had already been spent on the work both of the group and of the grant operator itself.

It is obvious that such groups, which do not produce anything of any academic worth, but consume enormous funds, have existed and still do exist, and on a permanent basis — there is one very noticeable recent example in the field of Slavonic studies in Germany. But temporary predatory groups, thanks to their mobility and extraterritoriality, can make it difficult for outsiders to discern the impact of their work.

How I see promising work that would assure a productive academic outcome: above all, it seems important to me to separate the teaching and academic structures of universities and research centres where students are taught by the staff. That is, there ought still to be one or two *research professors or research readers* in the departments of universities and other institutions of higher education. This post may be permanent or temporary. I would support one research professor's post with a ten-year contract (and the requirement once every three years that the holders of such positions should present an account of their activities over that period to a commission of their colleagues) and one research professor's post with a three-year contract. Members of the department who had been engaged in teaching for a long time and who had accumulated preliminary material for a book or a series of articles which they would like to bring to completion could apply for the latter. Each professor could have one or two graduate students every three years as trainee specialists, but they would not teach undergraduates.

In an analogous manner there could be two posts for research readers with terms of ten and three years. They should be completely relieved from teaching. Under such a system the remaining members of the department would in no way be obliged to write any academic works, since, as we know, they are thoroughly overworked in teaching and administration. But they should have a right to a year's sabbatical every seven years, and that, perhaps, should end with an article. To run the department there should be someone with the title of professor and head of department who should not be obliged to publish any academic work. The system of academic indicators for the teaching staff should be revised accordingly, of which we shall speak in our answer to the third question.

The selection of postgraduate students at each department or research centre should be done according to the following criteria: evidence of an inclination towards independent academic work (even if only at the microlevel) as an undergraduate, especially in the final years when students begin their postgraduate career with a ready-made project for their studies and advance work already completed independently in that sphere (including independent preliminary collection of material on his / her topic), having read the literature on the subject going far beyond what was required for their courses; and a capacity for critical evaluation of their subject of study. The second criterion is important, because a significant number of active students belong to youth subcultures (some of them political) and see their future as apologists for them. As experience shows, postgraduate studies do not teach them to view the subject critically, but only reinforce their convictions, and as a result all the efforts of their supervisors and members of the department are in vain. For this reason, I suggest that the 'postgraduate plan' and supplementary payments to supervisors should be abolished, and instead the department should have to demonstrate to the council of the university or the humanities division why so-and-so should be accepted as a postgraduate. In such a case the university might find the means for realistic grants to a small number of postgraduates.

The basic direction of research at research centres should be retained. It should not be revised or refined until the academic or supervisory council considers it necessary. Beyond that, the system of work will depend upon funding. If there is stable funding (from the state, or the municipality, or the university) there should be two options.

The first is a group of *permanent academic staff* aged from forty to sixty-five (optionally up to seventy or even seventy-five in the case of high academic results and a national reputation) with *permanent contracts*, all with higher degrees and significant publications (i.e. monographs from respectable publishers) at the time of appointment, serious and even major specialists in particular areas that correspond

to the general subject area of the institute. This means that every five years a member of staff should be appraised both within the institute and possibly by the supervisory council, which should be capable of evaluating the quantity and quality of the results, the originality of the subject matter, and the degree of a person's activity in academic organisation (editing journals, organising conferences, working in the administration of funding, etc.). Their work plan for the next period should be approved. The average salary of a permanent member of staff is assessed at 1.2 of the average unit of salary (the question of increments being regulated according to the relevant legislation). Permanent members of staff make up 20–25% of the total number of posts that the centre can finance from its permanent budget.

The second option is for research groups that are formed for ten years and can apply to the council of the research centre for an extension of a further two years. This is a perfectly possible term for extensive projects. For example, the proposed academic *Dictionary of Russian Writers of the Twentieth Century*, which will be compiled and published over a realistic thirty years, is broken down into three blocks of volumes, each of which will be prepared over such a period of ten years. It is assumed that part of these groups will be led by *permanent academic staff*. If they undertake this and are successful in having the project for the researcher group's activities approved by the institute's specialist commission and the supervisory council, their salaries will be increased to 1.5 of the average unit.

But it need not necessarily be so. A project might be proposed by external researchers (from outside the institute) within the regular competitions or by people who work at the institute on *specialist contracts* (see below). Two- or three-year contracts at 1 average salary unit are possible within the *research group*, and these are divided into *temporary* and *extensible*. A specialist is appointed on a *temporary* contract to do a specific piece of work (for example, participation in an expedition to work with a language that (s)he speaks and the subsequent transcription of recordings). A specialist is appointed on an *extensible* contract for the whole period of ten years, but with the possibility of termination after three years if they do not pass their appraisal by the institute's committee for the assessment of the project (for example, if they have not written a single article in three years, or have not published anything substantial over six years).

Anyone who has worked for ten years at the institute (within a fifteen-year period) on *temporary* or *extensible* contracts is entitled (when a place becomes available) to a *specialist contract* (20–25% of the posts within the institute being allotted to such positions). This means that (s)he will have the opportunity to propose his / her own new project to the competition within the institute, or, if the project

is not accepted by the commission, to work for up to five years at 0.75 of the salary of a member of academic staff, until they succeed in having their project accepted, or are appointed as member of academic staff on an existing project, or leave the institute.

Research centres should also have their public relations units (effective, as at the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen at Vienna) and publications of their own and commercial presses (as at the Forschungsstelle Osteuropa of Bremen University in Germany). In some centres there may be staff responsible for government relations. The grant department is important,[1] and should systematically seek to obtain grants and other external sources of funding.

The director of a research centre is chosen for a ten-year period from among the centre's permanent members of staff (or else candidates with a comparable status and specialisation from other research centres) at a salary of twice the average. (S)he may not occupy the post for more than two such periods consecutively. A former director retains the status of a permanent member of the academic staff of the institute for the next ten years.

In these conditions the expression 'academic school' becomes largely devoid of meaning, and to me personally it appears obsolescent. In my academic career I have seen no more than three serious academic schools connected with the names of serious scholars and good administrators. Their active evolution was mainly due to attracting a large number of graduate students. Both the formation and the work of such schools are impossible to predict. But even though at least a third of the specialists that these three schools turned out were mediocre, and though they inflated the number of graduate students, as such I have a positive opinion of them.

2 In my opinion, four fifths of the texts presented even in first-rate academic journals have little scholarly value and are only needed so that their authors can justify the grants they have received, or their postgraduate studies, or some other obligations. The overwhelming majority of these four fifths (in our disciplines in the humanities) represent a repetition of what has already been said (and not long ago) in another place and at another time (and perhaps in another language), using 'a bit of material' of one's own, discovered in the course of *project activities*. At best they can be used as illustrative material to the prevailing tendency already set out in the seminal article.

Moreover, the result of the *project activities* which we discussed in the answer to the first question is that many postgraduates publish,

[1] In UK universities, this is called the research support department [Eds.].

albeit with difficulty, their dissertation in the form of a book (which was, still, basically written while they were postgraduates), but have great difficulties with their second book, which ought to reveal them as established specialists. A good book is written on the basis of systematic research in a tranquil setting that allows one to concentrate on it alone, without being torn between giving lectures, administration, and participation in several projects.

Systematic work in a particular field of study with material that has been accumulated and systematically collected not only favours a more complete utilisation of the material, but allows it to be more profoundly analysed, and allows a knowledge of the literature on the subject and the positioning of one's own texts in the context of the research topic. Unfortunately we have now come to a standard situation in which the greater number of *project texts* spend a page and a half recapitulating Bourdieu or Foucault, give a brief mention to a couple of predecessors in the field (out of the twenty who have really written about it), and then reveal that the author has read an archive, or two websites, or visited a monastery or a village and there obtained the desired knowledge of the workings of such-and-such a mechanism of social connection, allegedly representing this and that. That these impressions might change on acquaintance with other, similar objects (for example, five more religious communities operating under the same denominational 'label') and that conclusions should be drawn from the analysis of multiple and varied sources (which supplement the archive in question) is perhaps known to the authors of such texts, but not put into practice.

There are two more excellent methods of destroying the results of genuine scholarship.

Firstly, publishing in a collection of articles instead of publishing a book. As a rule nobody reads these collections, particularly if they are published in small print runs by obscure presses. An author has to do serious PR for his / her article for it to be noticed even by twenty or thirty of the specialists who are interested in the topic. The publication of these collections is mostly financed out of grants and they are, precisely, the result of *project activities*. In my opinion, 80% of them are absolutely useless and quickly go out of date.

Secondly, an author might carelessly (i.e. without proper scholarly editing, and badly printed and formatted) publish a book at a 'tame' press which is not widely known in the larger world (for example, that of a 'deep provincial university publishing house'). And then the person publishing the book has to buy up some of the copies and give them to the same twenty specialists that (s)he knows.

In this respect it seems to me that the editors of journals whose editorial profile is formed by an editorial board headed by competent

editors who know what they want produce far more interesting publications that those that are peer-reviewed. I have been a reviewer, and been reviewed, many times, and therefore I know that in the latter case the editors often accept works that they know to be weak and throw them to the reviewers, thereby distracting them from their work. At the same time there is a stratum of works of average quality which the reviewers begin to surround with conditions for improvement that may seem excessive both to the editorial board (who simply decide that there are too many of them and that it would be better to reject the article) and to the author (who may simply not have the material to expand as suggested or may not have the time or the energy to rewrite the article completely so as to satisfy his / her colleague's wishes). This leads to the loss of some texts that might have been interesting. But the main thing about 'edited' journals is that they commission articles from authors (those whom they regard as good), motivate them and bear responsibility for the article's publication. Thereby weak authors fall by the wayside, average texts may be improved by working with a good editor, and the journal grows in quality.

The fundamental changes of recent years seem to be that despite the growth of the Internet (or perhaps as a result of it), the scholarly field is disintegrating. A significant number of high-quality scholarly journals and books are not freely accessible on the Internet, and the academic community has stopped going to libraries, making do with desultory searches on the web (or perhaps on Academia.edu and other similar resources). Critics no longer even mention that the author of an article or book has not read or cited many of important texts by his / her forerunners. The overabundance of scholarly literature that is of secondary value and inessential leads many authors to ignore what their colleagues have already written, including articles and monographs that ought to be cited without fail. This is particularly characteristic of foreign authors writing on history or on the contemporary post-Soviet area, who do their best to ignore authors who write in Russian on the same subjects (particularly in journals or collections of articles).

That is, specialists in some relatively narrow field who are involved in the milieu of similar researchers as it exists in the world as a whole, have some acquaintance with other researchers and meet them at conferences from time to time, but literally one pace away from them, in a neighbouring field, there is another circle that has little connection with them. There are journals that ought to bring these circles into contact, but it seems to me that over the last twenty years their role has diminished for the reasons already stated. Scholarly publishers that publish monographs and collections are in better condition, as is the system of the book trade in specialised literature in the humanities. They are flourishing and booming in

Russia precisely because the significance of journals has diminished, and authors have become aware of the need to publish monographs (or collections on a specific topic) in order to present their knowledge.

Another change for the Russian Federation and the other post-Soviet countries has been the introduction of metrics, as I shall now discuss.

3

Metrics indicators in the post-Soviet area have become an unmitigated evil, suppressing real academic activity. Some years ago, I was contracted to assess the faculty of history at a leading university in by no means the poorest of the Central Asian states. The departments presented lists of their members' publications, and I was surprised that almost all of them were in Dutch, Polish and Czech journals that I had never heard of before, and literally three or four of them. What was even more surprising, all the publications were three or four pages long. When I asked for the texts of the publications and discovered that all this could be called, at best, ratiocinations on well-known subjects ('The Method of Interviewing', or '[The President's] Contribution to Strengthening the Country's International Position') I wondered about this strange type of publication for historians' work. 'But that's all they ask for,' they cheerfully replied. (I should say that only the department of archaeology there distinguished itself (partly) by normal publications, mostly in Russian or Ukrainian journals.) The vice-chancellor of the university, a chemist, whom I managed to meet, did not see any problem in this and insisted that the Scopus rating of the faculty was sufficient to meet the requirements of the Ministry (headed by 'technocrats'), and so the faculty was working well. It was effectively at that point that I realised why I received through the post such an incredible quantity of advertisements for Scopus publications, and why some scholarly journals in Moscow that I used to respect had for several years been publishing nothing but bad and absurdly short articles by senior scholars from all over the former Soviet Union. The ministries' demand for publication in Scopus journals from all lecturers had simply created a gigantic market for academic forgeries which had replaced the few normal, honest publications that these lecturers might have produced once every two or three years. Much has been said about this, and better than I could say it here. And this is what made me say, at the beginning of my answers to the questionnaire, that researchers should be separated out from the teaching staff, and lecturers should not be made to conduct academic work. They are now something like teachers at the schools of the past: they have to try to give their students some sort of knowledge.

Scopus and similar banks of publications are not, as far as I know, used in the sphere of the humanities in Germany. I have not heard that my colleagues in the USA and Great Britain have ever taken an

interest in their ratings in these databases, or in anyone else's. And for considering an application for a post, so far, a list of publications and references are sufficient.[1]

As for real research and researchers, what immediately strikes me in a person's cv are the following points: whether there is a monograph (or more than one), and where it is / they are published (i.e. how prestigious the publisher is); where the author publishes articles and how often (in the areas that I know there are about twenty top journals), and whether (s)he has published in collections that I have on my shelves or that, judging by their titles, I ought to have. I think that if the directorate of a university or a ministry needs to assess the activity of a research centre once every five or ten years, it can do as it used to do and appoint a commission of scholars who are specialists in that field or similar ones. And for current monitoring it could once a year collect information on employees' publications and other forms or scholarly and educational activity. Probably nobody really reads these reports, but if anything happens, the functionaries of the administration or the ministry can be at peace. In any case, university administrators do not understand and cannot understand the contents of publications in a specific discipline.

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1 The first thing that comes to mind is the metaphor of bus routes for the inhabitants of a small town. A new grant, a new institution — another route, on which you will occasionally meet people you know, and soon get to know the people you don't. And all this takes place in a familiar small town where all the people speak different languages, but all understand each other. This is probably conditioned by the specifics of those fields of knowledge that form my sphere of interest. Acquaintance at a distance with colleagues who are in principle new quickly grows into collegial partnership. Transference from one institution to another is a regular development of scholarship and teaching, but at the same time the point with which the researcher is identified often remains his / her *alma mater* and academic school. At present a tendency can be observed to unite leading

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[1] Cf. the comments by David Edgerton, Stephen Hutchings, Catriona Kelly, and Eve Levin in the discussion of applied bibliometrics, *Antropologicheskij forum*, 2019, no. 40 [Eds.].

academic centres from different institutions to form temporary megalaboratories, which operate for about five years. In Russian conditions it is the umbrella topic that is fundamental, and provides a framework within which individual disciplines (and scholars) find their niches. Collegiality is the most important thing in this sort of development of scholarship and teaching, and the results of your work may be refined in the course of free discussion.

2 Academic work is a long process, it can last for years, and it will be some time after that that the results are evaluated. Interim results have to a large extent the nature of propositions and announcements of the work, but do not show its results. I was struck several years ago by the increase in the number of summary outlines in publications, my own and my colleagues', as a form of publication. These are often sketches and drafts of future learned articles, many of which were never brought to completion as substantial works. On one hand this is not a bad thing: these outlines form a sort of research archive, and one can always come back to them to work them up into a full-scale publication. On the other, the abundance of draft publications expands the search field, in which it is hard to find one's bearings. The collections of works that must be read take up gigabytes on a hard disc, one has time to read only the basic works, and the rest remain in the blind zone. What I have said reminds us of ideas in Max Scheler's *Ordo amoris*: horizontal order paradoxically leads to a levelling out of vertical truth. And a short answer to the question asked by the editors of *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* fully illustrates the summary style of which I have written above.

3 'Scopusomania' some years ago had already given rise to the idea, mostly among young scholars, that one must at any cost publish in those journals that are included in the necessary databases. The criteria of success were derived from the number of such publications: five to ten over five years meant that you were fit to head a large grant such as one from the Russian Science Foundation. New journals are gradually included in the databases, authors send in their grant reports (let us compose a line from an imaginary report: '10 articles published in journals included in WoS and Scopus'), the funders amend the formal criteria necessary to apply for a grant, the authors publish... As the inevitable result of this process, the system for evaluating the results of academic work, constructed over some years, easily collapses. Everyone has probably noticed that the next step in metrics — registering the quartile of the journal where an author is published — is a sort of crutch to find some way of regulating the endless flood of publications, the quality of which is by no means guaranteed by the formal level of the journals. In the near future this system of attaching journals to databases will probably lose its value.

In this connection there arises the question of a professional audit of the quality of the academic work of one's 'workshop' colleagues. Such an audit would be possible with the creation of a base of independent experts from specialist laboratories and research centres, each of which would be allotted a particular field of knowledge. This idea could relatively easily be put into practice: one could send a circular about experts to academic centres of repute, collect a pool of specialists, and post the data received in the form of a thematic index on the sites of the relevant journals and organisations. Then, whenever an assessment of results had to be made, it would be enough to apply to one or another expert. It would be necessary to supplement the database and keep it up to date, and to pay the experts for their work — and this project could well be supported by a long-term grant.

ZHAXYLYK SABITOV

I am a political scientist by education, and my main direction of research is the mediaeval history of Kazakhstan (tenth to eighteenth centuries) and interdisciplinary research into the population genetics of the ethnogenesis of the Turkic peoples. In the course of my work, I am in quite frequent communication with colleagues from Russia, although, of course, I do not know all the details of the changes in the Russian academic sphere. In my view there are no changes that are unambiguously positive or negative. Scholars in different disciplines, institutions, countries and cities do indeed have different views on the processes of transformation which have impinged upon the sphere of scholarship both in the world as a whole and in Russia in particular. Some people's 'golden age' is other people's 'period of stagnation'. Moreover, Kazakhstan has for some time already had its own unique experience of the transformation of the academic landscape, especially in the last ten years. I shall try below to answer the 'Forum' questions in greater detail, with particular attention to the experience of Kazakhstan both in the humanities and social sciences, and in other disciplines.

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1 Up to 2011, Kazakhstan was living in the institutional inertia of the Soviet past. The only

radical change in the period before 2011 was the liquidation of the National Academy of Sciences as the main driver of the development of Kazakh scholarship. The Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR was created in 1946 out of the Kazakh subsidiary of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. According to the informal table of ranks of the Soviet period the president of the Academy of Sciences was considered the second most important person in the republic. Thus in 1952–1955 the president of the Academy was Dinmukhammed Kunaev, who went on to be First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Kazakh SSR in 1960–1962 and 1964–1986. In 1974–1986 the head of the Academy was his brother Askar Kunaev. In the 1990s there was broad opposition at the Academy to the President of Kazakhstan, N. A. Nazarbayev. Considering the powerful authority of the Academy at this period, the leadership of the republic took a series of steps to counteract it. The Academy was deprived of its status, and became 'a social organisation'. In 1996, in addition, it was amalgamated with the Ministry of Science. In 1999 they were separated again, but all the academic institutes that had previously belonged to the Academy now belonged to the new ministry. However, in other fields of scholarship the changes were not so total.

In 2011 a new law on science was passed that changed all the rules of the game that had previously existed. The period of solid, stable organisations was over. There were now three types of funding: basic, grant, and programme-directed. The basic funding was provided for expenses on infrastructure, and also for the salaries of administrative / managerial and technical staff. That is, it did not provide for the salaries of academic staff, who could be paid only if they won grant or programme-directed funding. These two types of funding were distributed as follows: projects first received an independent evaluation from three anonymous reviewers, then on the basis of these scores the National Academic Councils (NAC) decided which projects to fund, and which not. Up to and including the 2018–2020 funding round the distribution of grant and programme-directed funding depended entirely on the NAC. Frequently the choice of recipients for grant and programme-directed funding was influenced by non-academic factors. Programme-directed funding, moreover, could be called 'large grants'. In such conditions all scholars, including those in the social sciences and humanities, found themselves practically in a 'zone of turbulence'. Failure to receive a grant meant leaving either for another profession or for university teaching, which left no time for research.

As an example, one could cite the Institute of History and Ethnology (the main academic historical institute in Kazakhstan), which is situated in Almaty. In 2016 its overall budget was about 54 million tenge (about 11 million roubles). Of fifty-nine employees, fifty-one

had academic posts, and were not therefore paid from basic funding. Of the 54 million tenge, 30 million was spent on infrastructure and on the salaries of administrative / managerial and technical staff. All the remaining academic staff, fifty-one persons, received about 24 million tenge between them, that is 40,000 tenge (8,000 roubles) a month. This was a very low volume of funding for the main academic historical institution of the country. Moreover, in the same year a full professor at Nazarbayev University got about 54 million tenge a year — a salary equal to that of the fifty-nine employees of the Institute of History and Ethnography. In fairness it should be said that the volume of funding at state research institutes varies and entirely depends on the social connections of the director of the institute, who has to run like a hamster in a wheel to obtain funding and spend a large part of his / her time in the corridors of power in the capital of Kazakhstan.

Unquestionably, the end of a grant or a project leads to the breaking up of the team and the departure of some of the participants to other organisations. In the case of Kazakhstan such mobility has led to a flow of academic staff from research institutes to universities, where funding is much more stable. Therefore, many of those academic centres that are outside universities are stagnating in the new conditions, except for those where the director is able to use his / her wide social network of contacts to win a large budget for the organisation in the framework of programme-directed funding or state contracts. In this way the academic schools that existed before 2011 in non-university research institutes have either ceased to exist, or are in an 'academic coma', occasionally showing signs of life.

2 In answering the second question, it is worth noting several different aspects. One of them is the relatively low productivity of Kazakh scholars. Thus in 2015–2017 there were about 1,800 projects that received grant or programme-directed funding from the Ministry of Education and Science. If we look at the results of these projects, we find that over the three years when the projects were underway, their leaders published only about 600 articles (according to data from the Web of Science) which referenced the number of the grant. The average 'cost' (correlation of expenditure to a single article) of an article from the Web of Science database within these projects was 100 million tenge (20 million roubles). There are several reasons for this. First, the low academic level of some Kazakh scholars. Such people mimic the development of scholarship, but do not develop it. For example, to judge by the academic reports, leaders often list articles that bear no relation to the project. When in 2017 I was working in a commission to assess six academic organisations, I discovered that three of the six had included in their report one and the same article in a good journal. Moreover, none of the co-authors of the article was on the staff of the said institutes. In the

best cases, some of them carried out some minor work within the framework of the project, and were foreign citizens to boot. Afterwards, I saw the same article in the reports of several more projects. In checking another programme, it also turned out that the majority of the authors whose articles its leaders had included in their report did not even know about it, and what's more had not received any payment from the project. Such deviant patterns of behaviour are usually characteristic of the older generation of leaders, who decry 'Scopuses', considering that publication of articles in foreign journals amounts to 'the leaking of state secrets abroad'. Some leaders from this category make constant use of the services of 'predatory journals'.

Leaders of research in the natural sciences and technology choose more elegant forms of camouflage. Thus at 'advanced scientific organisations' with big budgets, there are often instances of 'paid-for co-authorship', when an employee uses his / her administrative position to pay a large sum from the budget of his / her organisation to foreign researchers, after which (s)he becomes their co-author in articles which are really good, or average, and thus artificially increases his / her Hirsch index and other metrics indicators. There is also the practice of administrative co-authorship, when colleagues are obliged to include their superiors among the co-authors, even though they have made no contribution to the laboratory work or to writing the article.

Good scholars try not to use such devices. They are usually highly productive, and their new research often continues that which went before. Still, when they become leaders, they adapt well to the harsh demands of the new system. Sometimes it reaches the point that serious academic articles with the number of a grant are published even before the funding has been received. Leaders of this category often have many different grants (and not only from the state), which makes them have to juggle their academic productivity. Thus, the articles written within the framework of one project are divided amongst all the projects ongoing at the time, and with different grant numbers on different articles, the leader gives a successful account of himself / herself on all the projects. Such productive 'jugglers' are often appointed to full- or half-time posts at academic institutions, in the knowledge that they will write at least one article in three years within the framework of a project without supplementary financing, thus fulfilling the requirements and getting a good report.

Finally, by 2020 science policies had led to the emergence of a new table of ranks among the academics of Kazakhstan, in which there were such categories as 'ordinary mimics', 'elegant mimics' and 'strong scholars'. As for the social sciences and humanities, it is worth further designating a group of 'academic nationalists', who

maintain that research into the history of Kazakhstan, Kazakh literary studies, etc. is not of interest to the journals that are included in the Scopus and Web of Science databases. There is also a very narrow group of really strong professionals (they could be called 'academic monks') who make no attempt to fit into the new system, but produce their work in the old way, in defiance of 'the latest currents of fashion', that is, instead of writing two or three articles in journals included in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, they write monographs and do not strive to obtain state grants.

Overall, the new system forces people to be more mobile. Where in theory one good article could have been written, two not so good ones come out, because the directorate often requires quantitative rather than qualitative indicators. The new system of science management in Kazakhstan has led in natural sciences and technology to the propagation of a rule, which could be expressed as: 'Show me your Scopus ID, and I'll tell you who you are.' At the same time the 'good scholars' try to keep themselves apart from the 'elegant mimics', reproaching them for lack of substance: 'Dr Fourth Quartile' (all a person's articles are in feeble journals from the fourth quartile), or 'What can you talk to them about, they haven't got a single decent article where they are the first or corresponding author.'

3

In 2011, a new stage in the development of scholarship began in Kazakhstan. The degrees of Candidate of Science and Doctor of Science had been abolished the year before. To be awarded a PhD, it became necessary to have published at least one article in a journal included in the Scopus and Web of Science databases. From a period of overproduction of higher degrees, we have progressed to a period of a dearth of higher degrees, in which metrics indicators play a greater role every year.

Meanwhile there is opposition from the 'old academicians', who did not resist metrics indicators in 2011, when they were introduced as a mandatory indicator for doctoral candidates. After this, metrics indicators expanded significantly into other academic fields. Thus in 2017, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES RK) decided to introduce threshold indicators for everyone wanting to take part in the distribution of grant and programme-directed funding. It was announced that only those scholars with at least two articles in journals included in Scopus and the Web of Science would be eligible to take part in the grant competition. True, two weeks later MES RK rescinded that requirement under pressure from the 'academicians'' lobby, who had managed to convince the minister's father (who had been President of the Academy of Sciences in 1994–1996) that these requirements were 'diabolical'. But since the 2019 competition, metrics indicator requirements for the participants have been increasing. However, there has been a certain relaxation for

representatives of the social sciences, humanities and military sciences, resulting both from the specifics of these disciplines and from a reluctance to encounter strong opposition from the 'academic nationalists'.

As for my attitude to metrics as the main or only means of assessing academic work, I have a divided opinion. Without doubt, the main unit of production in the humanities is the monograph, and therefore good historians often do not have high citation scores or a large number of articles in the Scopus and Web of Science databases. Still, a regular historian can reorient towards the new system and start working to the new rules. The language of the academic text is also important for the humanities. Good scholars in the field who write in Kazakh are condemning themselves to '100 years of academic solitude', since there are not many scholars at their level, and even fewer who read Kazakh. Russian is also a limiting factor. Comparing those scholars who write in Russian with those who write in English, one can see that an eminent historian who wrote books and articles in Russian in the 1980s has much the same metrics indicators as a scholar from the same field writing more or less about the same things in the middle of the last decade, but in English.

Metrics may be compared with the role in education of the ENT (Russian Edinoe natsionalnoe testirovanie, school-leaving and university entrance examination, analogous to the EGE, Edinyy gosudarstvennyy ekzamen,[1] in Russia). This system may be decried with good reason, but so far nobody has invented anything better. If one considers metrics in the context of the humanities in general and history in particular, it will be thought that metrics must not be the only method of measuring a scholar's level or his / her scholarly output. High metrics indicators often do say something about the corresponding level of a scholar in the humanities, but their absence is not evidence of his / her lack of academic substance.

To assess scholars working in the humanities we need something like an examination in the creative arts, with a special commission to evaluate their entire achievement. But here we encounter a certain difficulty with the infrastructure. In the realities of Kazakhstan the result of a creative examination could be influenced by many non-academic factors. And in the case of a weak academic community and many poor scholars on the commission, creative examinations will often not be objective. Therefore it will only be by means of a combination of the two systems of measuring scholars' attainment that a well-founded evaluation will be obtained for scholars in the humanities. But it is essential to have an exact understanding and awareness of the merits and demerits of the two systems of assessment.

[1] The Unified State Examination, comparable with the Abitur, Baccalaureate, and A-levels in Britain [Eds.].

MARGARITA VAYSMAN

1 I think that any answer to these questions will be defined by the personal experience of the respondent. My own experience includes two years of work as an assistant lecturer at a large provincial Russian university (teaching two or three courses per semester), and then, after an MA and a PhD in the UK, first a one-year temporary lectureship, then hourly-paid teaching at various institutions, and then a permanent post at a British university. From this point of view, the situation described in the editors' questions appears typical, on the one hand, but on the other seems to reflect the specific Russian academic experience of the last thirty years. In my opinion, the main thing that distinguishes discussions of temporary and permanent contracts in Russia from the discussions in the British academic community is the question of the employee's wellbeing (both physical and financial). In my view the question 'What could be the consequences of this sort of movement for scholarship, teaching and museum work?' could well be extended to include 'the employee'. In fact, the demands of academic mobility often cut off whole groups of people, especially if this mobility is not only between institutions, but also between cities and countries; that is, there are various reasons why people cannot move to a different city or institution. Mobility in mid-career is something we see quite often, but ideally, of course, one would want career progression to have more than one strategic route available, where some people can leave for a better post at a different institution, and others can move up the internal 'ladder'. In this way career progression can be made accessible for people with different personal circumstances (in theory). As someone who started their professional life in post-Soviet Russia, I was surprised to discover that in British academic life, it is the trade union that deals with such questions and genuinely defends the interests of the employee against the employer.[1] I have

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[1] This is a major difference between higher education in the UK and the US also [Eds.].

no idea who could realistically (and not in a Utopian situation) take on such a function in the Russian system, but it might be worth thinking about how such negotiations could be taken out of the sphere of responsibilities of an ordinary academic employee.

As for mobility between institutions, from my point of view, this is a general problem of the humanities, since funding bodies' requirements for interdisciplinary research often do not reflect the reality of academic life, which is in fact still has hard disciplinary boundaries. One solution to this problem could be in creating internal structures within universities, which help ease the organisational burden of conducting interdisciplinary research. In my experience, these structures (like research institutes) work well both in Russia and abroad, so long as everyone understands why they were created, and it does not matter whether they are called departments or institutes or centres. Umbrella organisations of this sort allow the existence of an internal academic network, parts of which can be activated to apply for particular grants. This is not an ideal solution, since these networks are dormant for the rest of the time (apart, perhaps, from joint supervision of graduate students), but in general, they seem to work well.

The concept of an 'academic school' probably needs to be reconsidered as a whole. If it means that everybody has been taught by one person and their best friend, then by the standards of modern scholarship this is not a very good thing (not to mention the opportunities for the abuse of power that such a situation creates). If it means that a an entire group of people is using the same methods in their research, that is not particularly admirable either. Probably 'a school' in modern academic life implies a set of common values shared by researchers and their students, in which case mobility is no threat to its existence.

2 If I understand the reasons behind the existence of this system correctly, it was created with the scientific publications and research in mind and has never been properly adapted to work well for the social sciences and the humanities. In the natural sciences, as we know, the process of research — gathering and analysing data, and then publishing the results — is completely different, and, besides, articles are written and published by groups of authors. Therefore, in my view, the advantages mentioned do not extend to the humanities. It is important to remember that this is not a universal system: many countries have different systems, where grants do not pay for the activities of the lead researchers, or primary investigators (since they have competitive salaries) and go straight into the university budget, allowing to carry out research for which the university can not pay otherwise (sponsoring work in archives, hiring postdocs, etc.). In this situation applying and carrying out

work funded by grants proceeds differently, since an application for another grant can, for the most part, only be made when work on the previous one is complete.

3 We all, it seems, have a negative attitude to metrics. This is again partially because the assessment system is copied from the natural sciences and cannot easily be applied to the production of knowledge in the humanities. If metrics cannot be rejected altogether, the criteria that exist might at least be adapted to the humanities. The thing that worries me the most in the current state of literary studies is the status of the monograph, which is under threat. It may well be that this really is an out-of-date format for presenting academic knowledge, but then we should also reassess its importance for career progression. At present, in both Russia and the UK, the monograph is less important from the point of view of publication record than articles in leading journals. But from the point of view of progression up the career ladder, the number of monographs remains an important factor (as does their quality, measured by the status of the publisher, although it is clear that in reality publishing a book with a particular publisher depends not only on the quality of the manuscript, but also on the author's inclusion in the relevant academic network).

VALERY VYUGIN

Are the Current Changes Beneficial to the Social Sciences and Humanities?

Firstly I would like to express my sincere thanks to *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* for the unexpected opportunity to share my opinion on such an important topic.

Regarding what is happening to us all today, my position is very selfish and limited: on the one hand, when you are personally involved in the process and completely immersed in it, you notice only the things closest to you — what you encounter immediately and constantly; on the other hand, it is very hard to escape from the voluntary or involuntary subjectivism dictated by a concern for one's own comfort. I am acutely aware of these things, but I do not see that they are all that terrible. It seems to me that a conscious subjectivism is more productive than a struggle for the wellbeing of scholarship as a whole. When we speak of a social institution

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in general, be it scholarship, medicine, the family, and so forth, we are inclined to forget who really represents it.

The questionnaire that we have been given consists of three parts: 'Changes in the institutional organisation of academic life', 'What is happening to academic work and its results?', and 'How are the results of academic work evaluated?' My answers will look like a monologue, and partly the disgruntled complaint of someone who cannot in any case have much influence on anything. In principle, my view of the future of the humanities in Russia (and that is all I can discuss with any degree of confidence) is fatalistic. It seems to me that the basic factors influencing their development, stagnation or degradation are external: economic and social factors expressed in specific state policies.

'We are accustomed,' says the questionnaire, 'to "academic work being done" in stable, solid organisations — institutes or universities.' This is true, and it must be acknowledged that it is hard to break such a habit. Stability is not a bad thing: a permanent salary, even if it is only a small one, gives one confidence in the future.

This does, however, demand a qualification regarding the actual situation, at least in Russia: if it is hard to feed one's family and oneself on that meagre stable salary, what kind of confidence can there be? Stability of that sort seems completely inadequate. One has to cut oneself in two, in three, or in four between different employments, which, it can confidently be said, hardly favours concentration on research on long-term subjects (i.e. those that are the most important for every researcher).

As for me personally, I am to a certain degree accustomed to stability on the edge of survival. No sooner had my generation started postgraduate studies, and then working at The Pushkin House at the beginning of the 1990s, than salaries at the Academy of Sciences collapsed. We had to acquire new professions and pay more attention to them than to our main occupation. Thanks to that, of course, I learnt a lot. For example, I learnt a number of 'classical' (and now, perhaps, 'ancient') programming languages, and I shall never consider knowledge of that sort superfluous for a specialist in literature. But in terms of the application of my energies a lot was lost: this or that was not read at the right time, not understood in detail, not discussed with colleagues. In the end, as when applying to university, again a choice had to be made: either literature, or material temptations, in this case IT.

Nowadays, as the questionnaire rightly remarks, the concept of the permanent contract is fading. Whether this is a good or a bad thing is hard to decide, in my view, until you are faced with a real choice between the permanent and the temporary — assuming the pay is

comparable. Seriously, I do not think there will be many people who will voluntarily want to go through the process of application and negotiation every few years, if not every year. It is clear that it would make heavy demands on one's time and nerves.

One does not have to be particularly intelligent to understand why this is happening. Employees of the universities and academies are constantly experiencing mistrust on the part of the management structures (which are in principle not even academic) regarding both their qualifications and their reliability. And this despite the fact that university teachers and employees of academy institutes have already repeatedly demonstrated their qualifications during their studies, in the degrees they have obtained, and, in most cases, their publications.

My preliminary thesis, that of someone who has also constantly experienced the strategy of temporary contracts, is simple: it is better to have one permanent salary which allows you a decent life than several temporary ones.

However, even the combination of one permanent contract with several temporary ones does not guarantee a decent standard of living for the majority of university teachers and employees of academy institutes in Russia.

People more and more often oppose the idea of competition to 'egalitarian socialism' — those who cannot bear competition with their betters can just leave. But the laws of Darwinism and competition, primitively understood, do not operate anywhere, including scholarship.

Of course, there are particular cases, a sort of academic elite, whose contribution to the common cause is acknowledged to be significant by the majority of their colleagues. Its representatives rightly receive dividends from the 'symbolic capital' that they have earned, but that does not mean that other members of the profession should live on starvation rations and in fear of losing their place. To simplify things to the extreme: what will the elite do if there are no 'ordinary' scholars? Who will cite them and improve their ratings? Who will read them? Who, in the end, will be able unambiguously to separate the fashionable from the new, to discern, putting aside showy rhetoric and, as they say, in real time, an effective way of thinking beneath an obscure form? Now everything is moving in a direction when even the most active researchers are finding it harder and harder to maintain their position without a constant intensification of labour, and without having to divide their attention.

The 'grant policy' in the ideal, in 'laboratory conditions', is, in my view, by no means a bad thing. Provided that research applications are assessed by real experts and go through a strict but fair selection process, receiving a grant means the credit of trust and some

additional material reward. In principle that is very good. Everything changes when we encounter reality. As we know, getting a grant in Russia does not spare one from the need to do other work: to bear a full teaching load or carry out the institute's research programme. To do both with equal zeal is difficult. Try how you might, you cannot expand time, or clone yourself. As a result, we are constantly in the danger zone: failing either in the grant, or in one's permanent job.

This is all trivial, everyone knows about it and nobody can change it. Again, it all comes down to the thesis already proposed: it seems to the management structures, and through them to the society that they represent, that employees at the academy and at the universities do not do much work, and then only when it pleases them. Personally of course I would find it hard to disagree with the latter: many of us really do enjoy our work. Otherwise, how could we bear constant reorganisation and miserable salaries?

Lamentations aside, grant projects are good when they become for the term of the project the main sphere of activity. Other loads should be lightened or removed altogether when a grant is received,[1] and in Russian conditions, where salaries are very low, the basic salary should continue to be paid.

There is another reason, not an economic one, why grants are a very right and proper thing. Participation in various projects which presuppose looking for a relevant topic, significantly expands one's horizons, and without that contemporary scholarship cannot survive. Working on a project that does not entirely coincide with a researcher's original speciality presupposes a practical expansion of qualifications. Such projects are most often collective, which, if they are properly organised, means constant discussion and exchange of knowledge. I do not see any disadvantages to such a practice, and I am always grateful to colleagues who involve me in such an activity.

It is of course a great pity that individual grants have been reduced to a minimum and bespeaks (forgive me for this repetitive refrain) the same lack of trust towards the person of the academic. Scholarship is thought of more and more in terms of the factory, or perhaps rather of a team of loaders, where one principle operates: all together now, heave! It is clear that this principle does not operate in reality, but unfortunately this is only clear to academics, not to the structures that manage them. As a practical measure in the sphere of grants the only appropriate slogan, I suggest, is: more good and diverse grants while academics retain their salaries and posts.

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[1] In British academia, this is known as a 'buyout', and Western European grant awarding bodies (AHRC, Leverhulme, ESRC, etc.) regularly factor this in to application budgets (the same applies to European Union bodies, such as the ERC) [Eds.].

It is very hard to hide the detachment of management structures from teaching and research, at least in Russia. This dichotomy has various expressions. In universities, for example, in disdain for the departments. A head of department, who is both a researcher and a teacher, is visibly losing the ability to form a collective or to communicate his / her opinions to the higher administration. Is the institution of the department necessary? I have no doubt that it is. The life of a department, emerging over years, with its traditions and relationships, is precisely what can provide the requisite comfortable conditions in which productive research and teaching can be combined. Obviously this is not the sole guarantee of success. The institution of the department is not ideal, and its inner workings are often full of contradictions. But it is like democracy — nothing better has yet been invented. It is by no means essential for the relationships between its members to be cordial. It is important that at critical moments such a collective is able to come together and jointly take difficult decisions about both academic and ethical problems. Not to mention the fact that stable departments are an advantage in conducting a balanced age policy in which there is a place in the common life for yesterday's graduate students, and doctors of science at the height of their powers and authority, and those who can share a vast experience of life and scholarship.

If it is said that in current conditions departments must be modernised, then it is very important that the life of the department should be supplemented with those very same grant projects. The receipt of grants to a large extent levels out the faults of a hierarchical system in which the head is, still, primus inter pares. External recognition supplements the single administrative centre of power with a series of informal authoritative figures and thus allows parity to be maintained within the academic community. This helps to avoid relations of pressure and subordination.

In my opinion, it is better not to do away with 'traditional' structures, but carefully to supplement their work with new practices, enticing them with the obvious benefits of innovations. That which is not viable will wither away by itself. Of course, it is a very good thing when the administration is close to academic work and depends on the collegial opinion, implemented, for example, through regular elections (I return to my theme of democracy).

As for the 'academic school', today I find this concept archaic. It presupposes that authority resides only in one, albeit highly respected, researcher, and hinders (but in a good sense) methodological 'dissipation'. The humanities today are absorbing many directions, ways of working and even styles of expression that are often in acute conflict with one another. This is not a defect, but riches which should be cherished by creating conditions in which

relationships are transformed from antagonistic to equal, supposing not that the one should eliminate the other, but that they should be engaged in discussion or at least silent coexistence.

Neither can the present requirement in Russia to publish more and more in journals included in the ratings tables be regarded, in my view, as a bad thing. Firstly, it is a genuine integration into world scholarship. Secondly, it is a movement, paradoxical in current Russian conditions, towards an open society. As experience shows, many Russian studies students, although it is a long time since we have been in the USSR, still neglect foreign languages. This situation is of course harmful, and being orientated towards Scopus and WoS clearly helps to overcome it.

It is another matter that moderation is needed here too. Taking part in the race for publications in journals alone cannot lead to good long-term results. Allowing it to replace the preparation of monographs would be fatal to the humanities. I am deeply convinced that one cannot always express substantial thoughts and justify them in ten or twenty pages. Besides, the details and small things that compose a monograph sometimes turn out to be more vital and important than its main thesis. Therefore, both should be encouraged.

I suppose there may be cases when it is better for a university teacher not to publish regularly. If one's chief talent is an ability to accumulate the latest academic opinions, interpret them critically and explain them to students, isn't this a worthy mission on its own? After all, not all trainers play the game whose techniques they are supposed to teach. There is no need to insist on grants, no need to insist on publications — let researchers make up their own minds whether it is worth raising the stakes or not. The one essential is for them to be able to think calmly about tomorrow's lecture or the monograph a few years down the line, and not about what is going to happen in eighteen months when their contract expires.

Are metrics a good thing or not? In my opinion this is the same as asking whether distant reading is better than close reading. Quantitative, statistical methods should be considered as well as qualitative, interpretative ones. Only one thing is certain. We can seldom foretell how fundamental a particular researcher's results will turn out to be until some time has elapsed. It is better to water everything that you have planted, and not only those seeds or roots that come up first.

A highly rated author will get dividends even without statistical assessment by metrics, through popularity, the print runs of published books, high fees for speaking, and this is all very fair. But when metrics from being an analytical discipline becomes a normative and regulatory one, deciding each individual's fate by simply crossing living people off the list of professionals, that is a calamity.

In my view no special new methods for assessing research and teaching are needed. They will in any case not help to breed a new race of Einsteins, any more than Gorky succeeded in breeding 'red Tolstoys'. The rules of the departmental game, different in each case and emerging only gradually, will help to mitigate the 'natural selection' that is inevitable in academic life as in any competitive field. The only thing that today's teachers and researchers need, in my opinion, is trust and a good salary.

ALEXANDER ZHELTOV

I should like to start my consideration of the problem before us with my reaction to the mention (in the preamble to the questions for discussion) of the 'golden age' of scholarship. I find it impossible to speak of ideal conditions for scholarship, principally because of the diversity of what we call scholarship: for such a complex concept there cannot be a common ideal (a 'golden age'). Besides, the very expression 'golden age' (the ideal) is not in my understanding applicable to human society in any practical or scientific sense: that would be a departure into the sphere of faith and religion. It is typical that the past and the future are mentioned among the varieties of 'golden age', but the present is absent.

The keenly felt impossibility of the ideal in the objective reality of 'today' dismisses it to a mythological 'yesterday' or to a Utopian 'tomorrow'. The existence of problems in scholarship and education today does not evoke in me any nostalgia for 'Soviet' times. While I acknowledge the serious achievements of the scholarship of that time and its relatively high social status (in material terms as well), I cannot regard it as a golden age when Nikolai Vavilov was starved to death after being mocked during interrogation, when Sergei Korolev's jaw was broken, again during interrogation, when thousands of scholars were annihilated, when Andrei Sakharov was ostracised, and when vulgar Marxism-Leninism exerted an all-powerful pressure on the humanities. In principle, contemporary academic life has undoubted merits: freedom of

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movement and association, access to the object of study, and a huge mass of accessible information — although the transformation of history, for example, as a result of a series of recent legislative initiatives (and not only in the Russian Federation) from a forum for socially important discussions to what is essentially a party rulebook puts one very much on one's guard.

To my mind, the 'academic landscape' is structured first and foremost not by the 'organisation, results and assessment' of academic work, but by the external material conditions of academic activity (patrons, the state, the Federal Agency for Scientific Organisations (FASO), the Ministry of Education and Science, etc.) and the scholar's mutual relationship with them, on the one hand, and the actual process of scholarship (taking into account the changing times, the system of transfer of information, communication between scholarships, and their productivity not as reflected in reports, but in their own estimation and that of their closest colleagues) on the other. Starting from this, I shall try to share my ideas, based on quite a long parallel existence in the university system and the academy system, on two aspects of it: 1) scholarship and administration and 2) scholarship and the changing world. The aim of the discussion proposed by *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* might be seen as removing the contradiction between these two aspects.

1. Scholarship and administration

1.1. The division into 'professionals' and 'administrators'

A year ago, I was talking to someone I was at school with, who now works in a bank. While telling me about his work, he mentioned a systemic division in their management structure into 'professional' and 'administrative' sections and functions. That is, those engaged in substantive professional functions are separate from management. This reminded me very much of the transformations taking place in higher education and scholarship: academics and lecturers should engage only in research and teaching, and they should be 'administered' by completely different people — 'effective managers'. I asked whether this was an effective system for the bank, and was told, 'Not very...' Considering the fundamental differences between the functions of a bank and those of a university or institute, one may suppose that in the case of the latter the answer would be 'Far from it...'

The strict division into administrative and managerial personnel (AMP) and professorial and teaching staff (PTS) in universities, FASO (the Ministry of Education and Science) and the Academy is leading to many decisions being taken by 'managers' who have nothing to do with teaching or research. In principle colleagues from the professional (I would call it substantive) sphere are also involved

in management, but whereas professional leaders (deans and heads of department) are still (as yet) elected by their colleagues and enjoy 'feedback' from their units, although under heavy administrative pressure, the whole AMP is appointed by and strictly subordinated to the administrative chain of command. Making a distinction between the two systems is complicated by the fashion among bureaucrats for being awarded academic degrees. The ensuing relationships look like an attempt by strict but fair 'parent' administrators to force their lazy and inert academic 'children', who want to be paid for doing nothing, to do some work for a change. Academics and lecturers are somehow imperceptibly transformed from the main characters in the process to dependent, constantly monitored 'hirelings' who 'provide educational services to students' — as the teaching process is called nowadays.[1] But without them there will be no education and no science, while without administrators those things could perfectly well exist, there are plenty of precedents; for the process of teaching and research academics and lecturers have a far greater need of secretaries and assistants than of 'bosses'. The feeling arises, out of my experience of talking to colleagues, that most of us will engage in scholarship and communicate its results to students without extra monitoring, and most likely many of us will do it far more efficiently without as well. The creation of an additional stratum is an extra, unjustified expense, and so is the creation of those equally vacuous entities in the form of the various directives which create such a disturbance in the academic community.

1.2. What do administrators expect of academics?

Assuming that one cannot a priori evaluate the actions of the administrative 'chain of command' as directed purely towards the creation of more difficult conditions for academics and lecturers, let us try to understand the aims of the transformations that are taking place. If we are to find a structure in the actions of a presumptive AMP in education and science, I would identify four basic directions or goals: 1) the reorganisation of customary institutions and structural subdivisions; 2) the attempt to reduce the results of scholarly work to metrics and ratings (with an evident tendency towards an ever narrower treatment of 'significant' metrics, essentially, to reduce all academic output to two commercial metric databases); 3) the tendency to put academics and lecturers as often as possible into a situation of 'accountability' and 'competition', and to take them out of their 'comfort zone'; 4) hard 'stimulation' to seek grants (external funding), access to which to a very great extent depends on the same narrow metrics (Russian Science Foundation

[1] In the UK, the weird term 'teaching-facing staff' has also become widespread, particularly during the COVID-19 epidemic [Eds.].

grants). In universities, not getting grants carries a serious risk of dismissal. Let us take these points in order.

1.2.1. Science, scholarship, and education are in principle spheres in which tradition (as opposed to traditionalism), constancy, and an ability to foresee the rules of the game are very important. The reason is that both education and science are extremely long-term processes, the consistency and success of which are directly dependent on consistency in the functioning of the system. Innovation in thought appears when there is a stable constancy in the conditions in which scholarship exists. Of course, these spheres too must change in accordance with changing conditions. But changes must be thoroughly thought through, and above all by the academics and lecturers themselves, and they should occur when the old structures are manifestly not coping with their current tasks. But I am sincerely unable to understand what the faculties and departments in which everything we are so proud of was created, have 'done wrong', and what substantive process they are impeding. If 'educational profiles' are more effective in some areas, and the people who work in them are themselves conscious of this, then let there be educational profiles, but it is impossible to understand why a functioning structure should be rejected where it does function. The department brings together in a thematically logical manner several profiles (or directions, now) and is a permanent group of people that continues and develops particular academic schools. If the object of the changes is to destroy this collective and to replace it with temporary groupings of lecturers or grant-recipients lasting three to five years, with no clear future, I cannot see anything positive in them. If the basic idea is to replace elected heads of department and deans with appointed 'leaders' and 'directors' who are strictly dependent on likewise unelected administrators, then that relates only to the creation of a system of obedience which is in contradiction to the essential nature of academic activity.

The anonymous article cited in the preamble to the discussion, about the 'academic corporations' that are replacing the departments of academic institutions belongs to the same paradigm. Any department, even a very small one, is a highly complex, manifold organism consisting of various personalities, traditions, external links, etc. It is understandable that one can find many faults with such a structure, but it is all much more complex and manifold than the scheme for a new institutional structure proposed in the article (which is remarkably similar to the way the COVID-19 virus is depicted): this finds room for two councils, colleges, administration, logistics and postgraduate studies, but very little room for the ordinary academic and his / her work. Overall this project would most likely destroy the existing institutes, departments and school, but whether anything new would arise out of the ruins is by no means clear.

1.2.2. It is understood that no one will ever invent the optimum mechanism whereby a functionary might assess the substance of the academic process, any more than there will ever be one under which the scholar would receive his / her salary without any accountability. In principle, it is often only a narrow circle of close colleagues who can assess the substance of academic output, but that does not mean that it is impossible to invent some sort of balanced rating of different kinds of academic work, each of which could be subject to expert evaluation (such as anonymous review, for all its shortcomings). The existing 'rules for ratings bonuses' (regularly discussed at meetings of the Academic Council of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography) or the 'rules for academic prizes' at the Faculty of Asian and African Studies of St Petersburg State University could be improved, but they are significantly better balanced than any 'monitoring indicators' handed down from above. They would be even better balanced were it not for the pressure from those indicators, which are tied more and more firmly to the two commercial databases, and for this it is harder and harder to give any rational explanation. This obviously leads to immediate commercialisation, and we are all overwhelmed by corresponding propositions. And I truly do not understand why an article in a very serious foreign collection or collective monograph is less valuable than an article published within the framework of such commercial offers. There are of course many really serious journals in these databases, but they were serious before these databases existed, and publishing in them was highly esteemed by colleagues, but not as the only academic value there was. Moreover, we are competing for a place in these databases not only among ourselves, but also with researchers in those other fields of knowledge for which the databases were created, the exact and natural sciences. This sort of competition resembles a weightlifting contest between swimmers and runners against a background of the participation in the same contest of professional weightlifters. Scholarship is in principle a very varied activity, it cannot exist either without monographs or without articles (and very varied articles, from a scholarly concept polished over many years and published in a very prestigious journal to a small factual sketch in a compendium), or without conferences, reports, reviews, translations, and so on. The festschrift, now worth nothing in metrics, is a genuine record of an academic school: the master, colleagues, friends and pupils. It is the place where the school ceases to be a mere name and materialises as an exchange of scholarly ideas within the framework of a particular tradition and subject area. Some colleagues are more inclined to certain genres, others to others. One can make an approximate calculation of the labour required by each genre, and even exclude those texts that do not reach the appropriate scholarly level (but by reviewing, not by metrics). A scholar must fulfil certain requirements as to qualifications when reappointed or

recertified, but these requirements must have regard to longer-term prospects (not less than five years, or two or three years for a first appointment), and embrace variation.

It is obvious that all this 'Scopusomania' is explained by the desire to be among the hundred top-rated universities, which for some reason we must be, in accordance with decisions taken by the directorate. (What this 'Scopus race' is expected to do for academy institutes is still hard to understand.) But ratings and metrics, even if they are made as objective as possible, can only be the result of successful academic and educational processes, not their goal. Ben Sowter, the representative of the QS ratings agency, took as an epigraph to his presentation about it the words of Alison Richard, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge: 'Rankings have many faults and do not adequately describe universities and cannot show whether one institution is better than another <...> but I am very happy when Cambridge is rated as the top university in the world' [Sowter 2013: 42].

Incidentally, in this rating the number of publications in the database carries considerably less weight than, for example, the criterion of reputation, determined by a survey of academics.

In fact, why are we convinced that we must be leaders in the ratings? Universities and scholarship are a relatively recent phenomenon in Russia. There were universities in Italy, Spain, England and France even before our notorious Tatar-Mongol Yoke was established, and in Germany, Portugal, Sweden and Poland before it is traditionally considered to have ended. The first Russian university, that of St Petersburg, was founded in 1724, and actually began to work later than that. Of course, modern development goes at a much faster pace — the 'young' American universities have established solid positions at the head of various ratings, and in the history of Russian scholarship and culture the nineteenth century was relatively successful. But the twentieth century was not so unequivocally successful for our scholarship: the annihilation (Nikolay Gumilyov)[1] and emigration (the 'philosophers' ship') of educated strata after the Revolution (admittedly against a background of the levelling of the general average level of education), wars, repressions, the campaigns against 'cosmopolitanism', genetics, cybernetics and comparative historical linguistics, and ideological pressure on the humanities. One may note a significant weakening of ideological pressure in the post-Soviet period, but also a catastrophic loss of personnel: the very difficult material position of academics and lecturers in the 1990s, and in the following decade too, led to the emigration of some of

[1] The poet and writer (b. 1886) executed for alleged participation in a monarchist plot (the so-called the Petrograd Military Organisation) on 26 August 1921 [Eds.].

the leading specialists and to those who remained spending a huge amount of time on secondary employment, which was essential for survival — this was in effect an internal emigration. In this context the question that needs to be asked is rather how our science and education survived, and not why they do not take first place in the ratings.

1.2.3. Clearly, the system of short-term contracts / agreements does not take people out of their 'comfort zone' in order to enable a more effective manifestation of creative potential, but puts them off balance and creates a situation of instability and a race for indicators in which the academic / lecturer falls into a state of permanent dependence on the HR department. In principle I would not insist on permanent contracts (perhaps there should be some sort of 'structural tension'), although many of my colleagues in other countries do work in such 'permanent' conditions, and the people who have preserved their academic schools through the long years of penury do at least deserve to be treated with respect. A compromise decision could be reached so long as the aim is improvement, and not cuts. There should of course be requirements for applicants to particular positions. In this context, I think, the dissertation plays an important part as a demonstration of the capacity for carrying out long-term academic research which is recognised by colleagues.[1] But for this the dissertation must have its status as an attestation of academic achievement restored. A new colleague might be appointed for the first time for two or three years, but a permanent lecturer or academic who meets the criteria should not have to face any reassessment or competition more than once in five years (or for some, probably, once in ten years). And the requirements should be suited to a five- (or ten-) year period and assume some variation in the kinds of academic work, and not the strict determinism of figures. In principle there should be both a 'presumption of trust' towards the colleague and an aim to achieve scholarly results, but results should not be understood in too narrow a sense. Constant reappointment is either a way to cut the numbers of lecturers and academics, often followed by whole subjects, or a meaningless waste of time and nerves.

1.2.4. The demand that one should necessarily be awarded grants in order to be appointed to a post is already a reality in universities; it has not yet reached academy institutes, which is paradoxical, given the teaching load of professors and readers. Absolutely everybody understands that the total number of possible grants is many times less than the number of professors and readers, and there are also colleagues from academy institutes who are also applying for grants.

[1] Here again, it is true, the criterion should not be made absolute: we all know examples of colleagues whose academic authority substantially exceeds their academic titles.

The very logic of this idea is incomprehensible: it should be in the employer's interest that an employee is fully engaged at his / her place of work and in its subject area, and not in outside employment. There is nothing wrong with grants in principle: a Fulbright grant and seven months at Berkeley played a very important role in my own academic career. A university grant used almost entirely for systematic fieldwork in Africa by members of the department was also a success. But a permanent engagement with grants seems impossible because of my involvement in a very large number of different current obligations. And the specifics of my academic activities mean that I am constantly changing from topic to topic. One's relation to grants, like almost everything else in scholarship, supposes variation: for some people they are an organic means of academic life, for others not so much; but they certainly cannot be the only variant of existence for scholarship and groups of scholars. In principle there is very much individual work in scholarship: one has to read, think and write, as a rule, by oneself. Yes, the environment and contact with others is very important in the process of all this, but a total 'collectivisation' of grants will leave too much that is important 'by the wayside'.

Such a large number of 'letters' that have to be spent on discussing questions 'external' to education and science speaks of the seriousness of the pressure they are under. It will never by possible adequately to assess the effectiveness of academic activity without a substantive analysis carried out by academics themselves. And they did manage this task by themselves, not without difficulties, but without the constantly changing 'monitoring numbers' invented somewhere. Sometimes it seems that if one could try, at least for a while, to forget about the two metrics bases, academic life would return to its natural vital processes with a proper attitude to the various kinds of academic activity. The choice between penury and administrative diktat, in which our scholarship has existed for a long time, does not lead forwards, but round and round in circles, and one would wish to break out from it.

2. In this section I shall try briefly to share a few ideas about the interior problems of the humanities brought about by the rapid changes in the speed and volume of information exchange in the modern world, and a certain unpreparedness for this in the humanities.

2.1. As well as the economic, technological and socio-political lines of development, the process of revolutionary changes in the transfer of information has played no less a role in human history. The third and fourth information revolutions are reaching their climax before our eyes: mobile communications have done away with spatial limitations in conveying information, and the Internet has provided

access to an unlimited mass of data. The significance of these changes is equivalent to the overcoming of temporal limitations in conveying information thanks to the development of writing. It is obvious that just as the invention of writing led to the appearance of science and education, so the present changes will have a huge influence on how they operate. The dynamics of the processes that are taking place leads to difficulty in formulating lasting scholarly conceptions and creates an atmosphere of postmodernist relativism. Therefore, it seems, in the modern world A. A. Zaliznyak's completely obvious thought, 'Truth exists, and the search for it is the aim of scholarship,' is turned from a statement of the obvious into an idea that by no means everyone acknowledges. This sort of relativism stems (among other reasons) from the huge volume of information that is accumulated and available, and from the objective complexity of many of the problems with which scholarship and society are faced. Moreover, for those working within the scholarly paradigm (however difficult that may be to define) another postulate of Zaliznyak's is also evident: 'In any question under discussion, a professional (if he really is a professional, and not just a holder of official titles) will normally be more right than a dilettante.' Public utterance has become easy of access, there is no educational qualification for it.

All this makes one wonder what it is that the academic profession is offering to society as truths which to question indicates the questioner's lack of education, and what remains open to discussion. In the natural and exact sciences there is quite an extensive set of such truths. It is much harder to formulate a 'truth' in the humanities. It is easy to understand the reasons for this: everything that relates to humanity is much more resistant to discrete formulation, often depends on the subjective evaluation, views and interests of the researcher, and touches immediately upon both the scholar's and his / her public's social interests and cultural identification and, consequently, slips very easily from the academic sphere into publicist rhetoric. The boundary between the researcher's own scholarly and political, ideological views is extremely friable. Moreover, the lack of academic landmarks affects not only the media space, but also the professional milieu, and — what is extremely dangerous — propagandist subjective replacements for scholarly facts and discussions have begun to enter the area of legislation.

2.2. The existing orientation on numerical indicators only increases the wave of works that are flooding the informational field of scholarship even more. As a reaction against this there appear ideas that scholars should be 'allowed' as a set norm to publish only one article a year (the idea of a British researcher that recently appeared on Facebook). I think that a unified norm of any kind for scholarship is the wrong way to go, but there is a certain logic in this idea (provided the work / article is to be judged on its content, and not on the

quartile it ended up in). Computer databases and corpora are beginning to play a substantial role in scholarship (including the humanities), which begs the question of an even greater variation in scholarly work: someone has to create all this (and how do they account for their activities in publication metrics?), but someone has to analyse the data that have been collected. The question of the interaction between distance (online) and face-to-face forms of activities and conferences is evidently quite acute (especially in the context of our current 'self-isolation'). One might predict that the fact of a quite successful adaptation to distance teaching will inspire the idea of replacing ten or so lecturers with a recorded lecture on a single screen. The intuitive understanding that such an approach is wrong demands the setting out of that intuition in a form that society and functionaries can understand. As a preliminary variant, I will note that ten lecturers create an academic milieu, and suppose variation and dynamics, and when in a year or two or three substantial changes have to be made to the course, there will be no one to make them if we have lost that milieu. Besides, important though it is that our space is 'gadgetised', people risk losing certain essential qualities in the absence of a changing, but still extremely important personal communication between colleagues and between teachers and pupils.

2.3. Another aspect which it seems important to dwell upon is the way in which the terminological and analytical inventory of the humanities is lagging seriously behind the realities of the modern world and even a certain regression in that area observable over recent years. In Russian political and sociological discourse at least, such terms as 'tolerance', 'liberalism', 'common human values' and 'globalisation' have acquired a negative and often mocking sense ('*tolerast*', '*liberast*', etc.).[1] These concepts have been replaced by the popular 'national interests', 'national ideas', 'geopolitics', 'sovereign democracy', 'bonds', etc., that is, terms from the past which are accompanied by popular quotations from the completely different historical realities of former ages, understood as axioms and guides to action: 'If you wish for peace, prepare for war,' 'Russia has two allies, the army and navy,' 'If you don't want to feed your own army, you will feed someone else's.' This sort of 'archaisation' of the sphere of the humanities is in contradiction with the objective tendencies of social evolution (the information revolution has already created a single global space), and leads to an extremely dangerous conflict between modern military, technological and other achievements of the natural sciences (gene engineering, etc.) and an obsolete paradigm for interpreting human society in the humanities. Behind this process lies an incorrect interpretation of some terms and the fact that others are not 'terminological' in principle.

[1] The use of the term 'wokeness' in the Anglophone world is not dissimilar [Eds.].

There are serious problems with the concepts of the humanities not only in the Russian context, but in the global context as well, which makes the problem even more acute. At first sight the global political discourse operates with particularly positive concepts: the right of a nation to self-determination, the inviolability of existing borders, state sovereignty and non-interference in the affairs of other states, international guarantees of human rights. However, it is obvious that the right to self-determination is incompatible with the inviolability of borders, and sovereignty and non-interference cannot be combined with international guarantees of human rights. Besides, all such principles are problematic in their own right. Borders have changed throughout history, and many existing borders came into being through processes that were not exactly just. What do we understand by 'a nation' that 'has the right to self-determination', and who can be the subject of this process — existing territorial formations? ethnic groups? Was non-interference a positive thing during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda (900,000 killed in three months)? Who has the right, and under what circumstances, to defend human rights in other states? What is to be considered aggression, who should react to it, and how? To this we should add the problem of regional inequalities in conditions of life, which is becoming extremely acute in the conditions of the globalisation of the informational (and logistical) space. It may be imagined that the harmonisation of the present conflicted and 'non-terminological' state of international norms is a highly urgent task for the humanities, and it is highly desirable that it should be scholars who undertake it: many politicians, unfortunately, are too wedded to their own ideas of 'national interests' (which are always only the interests of the ruling elite that happens to be in power at the time), and this is by no means conducive to the formulation of compromise solutions.

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NIKOLAI VAKHTIN

Afterwords

Whenever I have to write a conclusion to a 'Forum' I am delighted at how different we are: how differently we see the same things and how differently we react to them. True, writing the conclusion is easier than usual this time: the topic engaged everyone to such an extent, and roused such rhetorical talents from their slumber, that it seems I have nothing left to do but repeat some of the ideas expressed in the replies and decorate them with a collage of quotations.

Not all the people who replied devoted their texts to answering the editors' questions, but we decided that we could include all the replies received in this 'Forum', since they are interesting in themselves and acquaint the reader with aspects of the development of scholarship which many of us have no means of knowing about. I have in mind mainly the response of our Kazakh colleagues (Bissenova, Medeuova). In a certain sense we have something to learn from Kazakhstan, even if in a negative sense: the current Russian reforms of academia are to a large extent repeating those carried out in Kazakhstan in 2011. It is interesting in particular that the system of grant funding for the social sciences and humanities 'has led to a flow of academic staff from research institutes to universities, where funding is much more stable. <...> [M]any of those academic centres that are outside universities are stagnating in the new conditions,' while 'the academic schools that existed before 2011 in non-university research institutes have either ceased to exist, or are in an "academic coma"' (Sabitov). The evidently unplanned results to which the academic policies of the government of Kazakhstan have led over the ten years of their existence are also telling: 'a new table of ranks among the academics of Kazakhstan, in which there were such categories as "ordinary mimics", "elegant mimics" and "strong scholars"' (Sabitov). Or again: thanks to the new academic policies, '[f]rom a period of overproduction of higher

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degrees we have progressed to a period of a dearth of higher degrees' (Sabitov). This seems to be something that Russian scholars still have to look forward to. I suggest that our Kazakh colleagues' unprejudiced criticism of the existing practices of 'inflating their Hirsch score' by the leaders of research institutes and projects could well be addressed to many Russian leaders as well.

I note that many of the replies are definitely worth attentive reading. I would nevertheless like to single out three of them: those by Alexander Zheltov, Zhaxylyk Sabitov, and Marina Hakkarainen. We should be grateful to the first for not begrudging his time and providing in fact a full-scale and very interesting article on the suggested topic; the second and third acquaint us with material, i.e. Kazakh and Finnish, that we know too little about and which is in many respects strikingly similar to the Russian material that we know better.

As we expected, there is a noticeable division in the replies according to the 'academic age' of the respondents: those who were not engaged in scholarship in the Soviet period and know no other system but that of grants find that they can manage perfectly well within this system; those who are somewhat older lament the transformation of scholarship as service into scholarship as servitude, and teaching into 'educational services'; those who are older still (Sabitov has aptly termed them 'academic monks') rather take the view that 'all these problems of yours are really of no interest to me': they look at all questions external to scholarship 'with a certain detachment', and calmly pursue their own interests (although at times the passion of their replies makes one doubt that the author is not much concerned with the climate in which scholarship exists).

It is probably hard to surprise or to frighten those of us who have had the Soviet experience of adapting to intolerable conditions of work: we have seen everything, know how to get round all kinds of barriers and obstructions, and excel at pretending to fulfil idiotic requirements ('when such an unprecedented somersault has to be turned' — Berezovich), while getting on with our work. It is harder for the young.

* * *

Most of the replies submitted acknowledge that changes taking place more or less simultaneously in the state academic policies of different countries are not a caprice and not fortuitous. 'We are faced with the fact that changes have been taking place. In my view, they must take place' (Hakkarainen). The reason is clear: 'Changes in the academic world are driven by the market forces allowed to re-structure universities in the name of excellence and efficiency' (Kovalyova). '[U]niversities remained till recently the last islands of

extramarket economics in an ocean of total commercialisation,' but '[n]eoliberal ideology has done away with "timeless" knowledge, and has tied academic activity to the imminent problems of today' (Hakkarainen). However, the reason for the reform of the system of research is not neoliberalism in every country: judging by one of the replies from our Kazakh colleagues, after the collapse of the Soviet form of state commissioning in Kazakhstan, a new kind of relationship between state and scholarship was formed in a situation where '"science for science's sake" was beyond the means of the budget of Kazakhstan' (Bissenova, Medeuova).

It is another question how exactly the organs of the state in various countries bring this reconstruction about and how academics react to their activities. In this connection, the question of the subject (or more exactly, to use a term from linguistics, the causer) of these changes seems interesting. We often describe the situation by means of intransitive constructions, as if there is no agent: 'What is *happening* now in academic life <...>. The principles for assessing the results of academic work *are changing* radically <...> the works of modern-day scholars are composed *under the influence of the need* to print relatively short texts' (Davydov; italics mine. — *N.V.*). But these changes are not happening by themselves, principles are not changing of themselves, and the 'need' does not arise as if by magic: behind all these processes there is someone's will, someone's decision, someone's conviction that these are the principles of organisation of scholarship and assessment of the quality of academic work that are the most efficient. We can agree or disagree with these decisions, approve or disapprove of particular changes, but we must, it seems to me, express our point of view and have no right to the position of an outside observer.

Other responses indicate the subject clearly: 'the "academic landscape" is structured first and foremost <...> by the external material conditions of academic activity (patrons, the state, the Federal Agency for Scientific Organisations (FASO), the Ministry of Education and Science, etc.)' (Zheltov) — pointing out the ever-widening gap between those who are engaged in scholarship (and teach in universities) and those who manage this process: 'The strict division into administrative and managerial personnel (AMP) and professorial and teaching staff (PTS) <...> is leading to many decisions being taken by "managers" who have nothing to do with teaching or research' (Zheltov). But the 'managers' do not trust the scholars, and we find this motif — the motif of (mis)trust — in many of the responses. Formerly Finnish society 'trusted the universities, considering that they could take care of their own organisation and their own activity without outside interference,' but global trends in academic life have put an end to this (Hakkarainen). Academics are paid by the state, 'which is mortally afraid of overpaying, and so,

in accordance with Lenin's heritage, it brings in accounting and monitoring everywhere' (Alimov). Academics 'are constantly experiencing mistrust on the part of the management structures (which are in principle not even academic) regarding both their qualifications and their reliability' (Vyugin). 'The main trouble with constant strict monitoring (euphemistically called "stimulation of publication activity") is, in my view, the breakdown of trust' (Arkhangelskiy). There must be 'a presumption of trust' (Zheltov). Researchers assembled in a temporary project group 'are surprised at the administration's mistrust and bureaucratic monitoring' when it comes to spending their own grant (Hakkarainen).

Overall, '[t]he ensuing relationships look like an attempt by strict but fair "parent" administrators to force their lazy and inert academic "children", who want to be paid for doing nothing, to do some work for a change. Academics and lecturers are somehow imperceptibly transformed from the main characters in the process to dependent, constantly monitored "hirelings" who "provide educational services to students" — as the teaching process is called nowadays. But without them there will be no education and no science' (Zheltov).

Why do *they* (the AMP) not trust *us* (the PTS)? Why are *they* always afraid that we will deceive them? The emotional and probably unfair explanation would be that 'they think we are like them.' I do not think that this is the reason: the reason lies in the very division into 'AMP and PTS'. And 'neoliberal tendencies' have nothing to do with it: it is hard to imagine a commercial firm that would try to improve its market efficiency by consulting one of the organs of state or hiring a team of officials who had little notion of the firm's business. Such a firm would be more likely to attempt to get on top of the situation with its own resources.

It is the same in our case: why bring in endless academic performance indicators and combined scores of publication productivity, why not trust the scholars themselves to organise scholarship, determine their 'ratings' and distribute their funds?

People will object that everyone knows many cases of academic criminality, false dissertations, underhand publications — how can their possibly be any trust? Here is an excellent example from Kazakhstan (though the same sort of thing happens in Russia): 'three of the six [organisations that had received research grants. — *N.V.*] had included in their report one and the same article in a good journal. Moreover, none of the co-authors of the article was on the staff of the said institutes. <...> Afterwards I saw the same article in the reports of several more projects' (Sabitov).

Yes, unfortunately it is so; but are we not putting the cart before the horse? Is it really unethical behaviour by the PTS that is making

the AMP bring in ever newer forms of monitoring, or is it these forms of monitoring that are forcing the PTS to take paths that are not always honest? I suggest that in some cases both of these could be true. Thus, a blind reliance on the ratings of scholarly journals leads immediately to the commercialisation of this sphere, the emergence of crooked publications which by some mysterious means have found their way into the Scopus and Web of Science databases and openly sell their pages. 'The ministries' demand for publication in Scopus journals from all lecturers had simply created a gigantic market for academic forgeries' (Mitrokhin). 'The need to fulfil increased requirements <...> makes scholars have recourse to publication in "predatory" journals' (Davydov). 'In the near future this system of attaching journals to databases will probably lose its value' (Petrov).

Overall, '[m]etrics indicators in the post-Soviet area have become an unmitigated evil, suppressing real academic activity' (Mitrokhin), although, as in the previous discussion of metrics (*Antropologicheskij forum* no. 40), opinions on this question are divided. Here is an important thought: 'Metrics <...> may be decried with good reason, but so far nobody has invented anything better. <...> High metrics indicators often do say something about the corresponding level of a scholar in the humanities, but their absence is not evidence of his / her lack of academic substance' (Sabitov). 'Metrics indicators give only a very approximate and sometimes distorted idea of the productivity of academic work' (Kozintsev). Everyone who replied was more or less in agreement that 'the assessment of a scholar's work cannot rely entirely on numerical indicators' (Davydov), and that 'only be by means of a combination of the two systems of measuring scholars' attainment that a well-founded evaluation will be obtained for scholars in the humanities' (Sabitov).

* * *

Who is responsible for what is happening in our life — institutions (social structures) or individuals (persons)? As we know, this is one of the eternal questions of social theory, and any one-sided answer to it will be incomplete and inaccurate. As Richard Pipes once joked, there are two ways of explaining why the Socialist Revolution in Russia failed: some say that the 'useless' Russian people spoilt good Marxism, and others that 'useless' Marxism spoilt the good Russian people. One thing is more or less clear: at different times and in different countries the balance of responsibility between institutions and individual is certainly different.

Scholarship is wrongly organised, say some, we have good scholars and administrators, but we need to change the system of appointments and promotions (or the system of contracts and assessment, or the

system of distribution of funds and choice of research topics) — and then everything will be fine. And they propose different varieties of such reorganisations.

In Davydov's response, the questions set by the editors are reformulated in considerably greater detail, demonstrating the divergence in the positions of academic staff and administrators regarding permanent or temporary contracts, with the conclusion that 'we should not make absolute judgments about the pros and cons of one form of contract or another' and that '[s]uch practices as the rotation of staff <...> and also long-term collaboration between a scholar and an employer, are together effective components of academic endeavour,' that is, neither system in itself guarantees success: only 'a combination of temporary and permanent contracts within a single organisation may create fertile soil for academic work.' This is doubtless true, but it is clear that the central question here lies in the actual balance between the two systems: this balance will certainly be different for different academic and research institutions, for different disciplines and in different regions.

Mitrokhin proposes an interesting scheme for organising academic work in university departments: he thinks precisely about the balance between permanent and temporary contracts, between young and mature scholars, between the teaching and research load. Hakkarainen writes about the same thing: '[P]roject work gives good results if it is based at a university on a permanent basis.'

It does not matter how the organisation of scholarship is constructed, others reply, the point is that the levers of management of this system are in the wrong hands, all that is needed is to replace the people in the key posts with others who are honest and altruistic, and all will be well ('the efficiency of scholarship, as of society as a whole, depends most of all not on the form of its organisation, but on the good sense, honesty and goodwill of the members of society' — Berezkin). '[H]uman dignity, unlike citations, cannot be measured in any units, in a certain system of values it counts for a hundred times more' (Kozintsev). It is hard to disagree with that, but it is not altogether clear how these recommendations are to be put into practice.

Returning to the relationship between scholarship and the state, Beskov clearly formulates his position on this question: the state collects taxes, the state invests part of this money in scholarship (and, therefore, the state determines the direction in which scholarship ought to move), and the function of scholarship is to benefit society. It is a seemingly irreproachable position, but see what happens when you replace the word 'state' with 'functionaries' (and that is, after all, in this case one and the same!), and it does not

seem so attractive at all, its weak points immediately become apparent, above all this one: it is meaningless to say how well / badly educated the state is, but it is quite possible, and necessary, to say how well / badly educated a particular functionary is.

Beskov gives an exact formulation of where this position (with the state in the middle) leads: 'we would be glad of the very fact that our article has been published in an authoritative journal <...>. When we publish an article, we want to please somebody, give an account of ourselves to somebody, stand out from among the crowd <...>. We do not worry about whether society will have any use of our article,' that is, the system described leads to the opposite result from what was expected: in a situation where the state has its hands on all the levers, scholarship cannot serve society.

However, '[o]nly the state is capable of changing this situation,' and it is naïve to hope 'that scholarship will regulate itself,' and 'it does require a clear political will capable of overcoming the desperate opposition of the milieu' (Beskov). It is not entirely clear which milieu he has in mind: if it is the bureaucratic milieu (and the 'academic administrators' who have coalesced with it), it is impossible to understand how it is capable of changing anything at all.

It is an open secret: there is a tacit, secret pact, one might say a conspiracy, between the experts and the writers of grant applications. The application writers in reality often drag the same topic out over several years, giving different titles to its various parts, and giving an account of themselves for the next grant with articles from the previous one (and often with articles totally unrelated to the topic). The experts see all this, but then, tomorrow they will be applying for grants themselves and will be doing exactly the same thing, because, as Alimov quite rightly remarks, it is impossible to complete a serious topic in three years. Therefore, the experts close their eyes to these discrepancies, and so long as the work itself is good, pretend that they have not noticed anything. This brings us back to the theme of trust: 'The main trouble with constant strict monitoring <...> is <...> the breakdown of trust. If the university, the funding body or the state is constantly checking up on someone in accordance with formal requirements, they feel that they are on the other side of the barricades, and as a result begin to think up various means of fulfilling these requirements with minimum effort, and not always the most honest ones' (Arkhangelskiy).

The discussion of the questions asked by the editors of *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* was intended not only as an exchange of opinions, but also as an opportunity to suggest some solutions that might improve the present situation. I have identified three such 'ideas' of which all, or at least the overwhelming majority, of participants seem to be in favour.

1. All the participants more or less agree that the existing system for assessing the productivity of academic work leads to a dangerous overload, to 'academic Taylorism'; this principally concerns those who work at universities. '[E]ver more results are demanded of them [researchers] — lectures, articles, public appearances <...> and project applications. <...> As a result, they do not work fixed hours, there is no division between work and leisure, and they feel guilty if they have no time to "do everything"' (Hakkarainen). This is not only true of Finland: the Russian ministry's demands are also plainly excessive (Davydov).

2. All participants are more or less agreed that measuring academic progress in the social sciences and humanities in three-year cycles is nonsensical. This measure is not 'adapted to work well for the social sciences and the humanities' (Vaysman). 'Our disciplines are slow, you can do nothing worthwhile in three years, sometimes not even in ten. Twenty years would be about right' (Berezkin). '[A]cademic research is a long-term activity. Particularly in those areas of knowledge that depend upon contact with people' (Hakkarainen).

3. Finally, there is solidarity amongst almost all respondents in their evaluation of the absurd situation when articles in the humanities are more highly valued than monographs. It is not long since '[l]iterary studies in this country was "nourished" on monographs, famous series of collections, dictionaries, atlases, editions of old texts with commentary, etc.' (Berezovich). Even today many are convinced that 'knowledge in the humanities is increased not by articles, but only by monographs' (Zheltov), and that 'the main unit of production in the humanities is the monograph' (Sabitov). It is, however, hard to write a good book under the present system for assessing productivity: such a book 'is written on the basis of systematic research in a tranquil setting that allows one to concentrate on it alone, without being torn between giving lectures, administration, and participation in several projects' (Mitrokhin).

* * *

Natalia Kovalyova gives an interesting turn to the topic: she traces the appearance of short-term research groups to the demand for interdisciplinarity, since this is the only way for scholars to react to the real challenges. As soon as the set task is completed, the team breaks up, since 'a new crisis is looming calling for a unique assemblage of skills, experiences, and expertise to best address it.' That is presumably precisely that field in which short-term contracts and high mobility are useful and justified. But there are other fields of scholarship in which mobility becomes superficiality, and short-term contracts are only a hindrance to work. 'A system of "working

on projects" turns out an endless stream of people who cannot concentrate on any topic and study it properly, and cannot write and cannot learn to write, because that also requires time and ability' (Mitrokhin).

Overall, '[s]cholarship is in principle a very varied activity, it cannot exist either without monographs or without articles <...> or without conferences, reports, reviews, translations and so on' (Zheltov).

Yes, scholarship is varied, but there is one 'but'. The modern academic world is unipolar: the fashion for academic theories is dictated by a single centre — American universities — and that is where many scholars aim to migrate. 'It is quite natural that the people connected with it created an assessment system for scholarly work starting from their own aims, needs and possibilities. However much we try, we shall never be able to fit into that system on an equal footing, and for one single rather silly reason: our native tongue is not English' (Berezkin). There are many scholars in Russia who write and publish in English, but this is not useful in all disciplines (Berezovich), and not only because 'many Russian studies students, although it is a long time since we have been in the USSR, still neglect foreign languages' (Vyugin), but by the very nature of the material. Articles in English are more widely read (Kozintsev), and they make a much more substantial contribution to ratings: 'Comparing those [Kazakh] scholars who write in Russian with those who write in English, one can see that an eminent historian who wrote books and articles in Russian in the 1980s has much the same metrics indicators as a scholar from the same field writing more or less about the same things in the middle of the last decade, but in English' (Sabitov).

Zheltov gives a brief but forthright description of this situation and comes to a conclusion with which one can only sadly agree: after the twentieth century that our country experienced, 'the question that needs to be asked is rather how our science and education survived, and not why they do not take first place in the ratings.'[1] Different scholars have different attitudes towards the situation that has come about in the humanities and social sciences: some regard the constant straining of officials to 'optimise' accountability, ratings and the monitoring system as a given, which one has to live and deal with somehow, and others regard it as an abnormal situation that has to be resisted.

The conclusion is a sorry one: '[t]he struggle for honest, serious and interesting scholarship against idlers, crooks, incompetents and fools

[1] Blaming all the calamities that overtook Russian scholars and Russian scholarship in the 1990s on 'Gaidar's government' (which, take note, lasted for little more than a year, from 6 November 1991 to 23 December 1992) is, I suggest, too simplistic a solution for a serious scholar.

cannot be won. It will always be waged, with varying degrees of success, under any form of accountability and organisation' (Berezkin).

In conclusion of this brief review of the responses I would like to mention two ideas expressed by their authors which it seems to me might be introduced quite easily and which would be a substantial help to scholars in coping with the problems created for them by not particularly competent officials.

The first is Timofey Arkhangelskiy's thought of borrowing from the practice of German funding bodies a compulsory data management after the end of a project (on the principle of FAIR data): the data collected must be put into such a form and preserved in such a place that anyone who needs them can easily find them and use them.

The second is Elena Berezovich's idea: 'there is a need for some kind of "field hospitals" with lightning turnaround of publications, in which short contributions could be printed and discussed and the interim results of research presented.' Such platforms could perhaps be organised on the Internet, without any Hirsch or Scopus, recalling, like Kozintsev, *The Hamburg Score.*

And, finally, the eternal: '[W]hen we speak of the contemporary problems of academic work, it is quite useful to look at examples from the history of scholarship' (Davydov). Who could argue? ...

The answers originally written in Russian
were translated by Ralph Cleminson