Chapter 13

THE END OF EUROPE AND THE LAST INTELLECTUAL

Fine-Tuning of Knowledge Work in the Panopticon of Bologna

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> It is waste of time to belabour shady schools, corrupt journals, stupid government officials, and unscrupulous exploiters of the eternally gullible. The ignorance of the unlettered takes no scrutiny to establish. What we need to plumb is the ignorance of the educated and the anti-intellectualism of the intellectual.
>
> Jacques Barzun, *The House of Intellect*

1. INTRODUCTION

Whether the final years of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first will from the historical distance be eventually seen as high intellectual modernism reaching even higher with one of its key institutions — the modern university — continuing to prosper, or something else, remains yet to be known. Commentators as different as Randall Collins (1998) and John Deely (2001) remain skeptical, suggesting rather that we stand at the beginning of deep revision of our philosophical understanding similar in the scale to that of the late Latin period in the early 17th century (Deely 2002). Philosophers of higher education in best of the days see the university in terms of complexity almost beyond the grasp of human understanding (Barnett 1999), on other occasions just in turmoil (Wallerstein

V. Tomusk (ed.), Creating the European Area of Higher Education: Voices from the Periphery, 269–303.

1969) or the institution of higher learning being ruined (Readings 1996). The chances that the period in the history of European higher learning known to future students of the continent's intellectual climate as the decade of *Bologna Fever* will be remembered as a period of great intellectual revival, or even of temporary stability remain slim. For many in the academia these are tough times after unprecedented growth and prosperity of the university. While academics make enormous efforts convincing themselves first, on the exponentially growing value of exponentially increasing amounts of knowledge circulating in our *knowledgeable societies*, before moving on to mesmerise the *stakeholders*, it is likely that with the availability of funds lagging significantly behind the rate of growth in the volume of knowledge products on offer, the unit price, and with it the value of any single knowledge producer, has been set on decline.

Undeniably, during the second half of the twentieth century, as post-war reconstruction and economic growth permitted vast growth in university enrolment, at least west of the iron curtain, European higher education experienced major expansion, if not success. This has borne many positive consequences: increasing social mobility from the working to the middle classes, the democratisation of society and rising cultural levels. Expansion of higher education, particularly in the context of the more recent economic down-turn, seems to have drawn European universities into a vicious circle — to survive they need to expand even more. However, further expansion, either by admitting more students to existing programs or by opening programs in new areas, threatens the identity of the university "as an aristocracy of trained intellect" (Searle 1975, p. 88), as well as exposing it to new economic risks.

Since 1999, European higher education has been subjected to the most systematic and extensive reform effort in its more than eight hundred year history: the Bologna Process. Views on the meaning of those reforms vary widely, some argue that it is nothing short of an attempt to bring a European higher education system into being; others suggest it is nothing more than the launch of a 'glorified mobility scheme'. Either way, the energy and resources invested in the Process by its sponsors, particularly the European Commission, can only be compared with the campaigns that communist dictatorships were able to afford, both politically and economically. The irony of the Process is that one of its goals — ensuring the success of European higher education on the world higher education services market — is a clear contradiction to the methods applied to achieve it, which include subsidising service providers, as well as political intimidation.

Once the process has been set in motion, irreversibly as the sponsors prefer to see it, it is legitimate to ask what its implications will be for the academics in European universities. Does the Process offer something

positive to the European intellectuals gathered in the universities? Will European intellectual thought be revitalised? Albeit still tainted with the shame of its tolerance of the Aryan nonsense of the Nazis until it was too late or of its sympathies with the likes of Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which has resulted in, amongst other things, intellectuals resorting to post-modern theorising (Wolin 2004), a large segment of the intellectual community has tacitly, if not wide open, accepted the Trotskist view to truthfulness:

> The life and death struggle is unthinkable without military craftiness, in other words, without lying and deceit. … To a revolutionary Marxist there can be no contradiction between personal morality and the interests of the party, since the party embodies in his consciousness the very highest tasks and aims of mankind (Trotsky 1938/1964, p. 394).

Positive intellectual change is not necessarily a part of the Bologna Process. Expansion of higher education over the past thirty or so years may turn out to have been self-defeating, in that by becoming a mass industry it may well have destroyed its own privileged status. In this context one could argue that the Bologna Process neither restores the former status of European higher education nor intends to improve to any significant extent its quality or even relevance; not to mention its intellectual vigour. One could then argue that in the best scenario it will remain intellectually irrelevant, in the worst case it may even harm European intellectual life. A large-scale technocratic process has evidently only a limited number of relatively simple tools available to accomplish its task. These may be sufficient to furnish new offices in every country and — should funding prove sufficient — every university, perhaps even to hire thousands of new quality commissars, job-profile developers, course modularisers and student exchange officers. More often than not, technocratic projects fail to make significant contributions to culture, a concept devoid of content for a technocrat in any case. Intellectuals — reduced to service providers by definition — and their concerns have only a peripheral position in the Bologna Process. In the event that the Process succeeds, universities will be subjected to additional pressure to exclude intellectual elements from the academic profession. If that does happen it will draw to a close the two-hundred-year battle for the hearts and minds of the free-floating intellectuals of Europe. Having gradually exchanged freedom for status and economic welfare, faculty members must soon realise that the only expectation their university has of them is that they be successful in selling standardised knowledge products: skills and competencies wrapped in credit-hours.

2. SOCIETY AND ITS KNOWLEDGE

Prophecies, self-fulfilling or otherwise, about our increasingly knowledgeable societies, with many rumours spread but little hard evidence, seem to have driven us into limbo. The alleged exponential reduction of the half-life of knowledge has apparently created a condition opposite to that of possessing knowledge — no knowledge appears to be worth learning or taking seriously any longer. The speed with which produced knowledge is being returned for recycling discourages any sensible person from investing in learning. In preference one should purchase an MBA degree, thus becoming a salesman or woman of knowledge produced by somebody less smart, or a manager steering rivers of knowledge, and anticipate solid returns from investment in the transferable skills of turning book summaries into PowerPoint® presentations for corporate executives. Imbalance between the consumption of knowledge and its critical assessment confuses the matter still further, since few possess sufficient interest or resources to explore the nature of the liquid flowing on the beds of the perceived rivers of knowledge. Or to put it somewhat less poetically, while social sciences are increasingly policy-oriented, support to theoretical and conceptual work is diminishing (Young 2004). There is every good reason to suspect that the final depository of the *old* knowledge is critically close to the source of the *new*, and that with this, the flows may well constitute closed circles. The nutritional value of what was once milk and honey may have been extracted long ago. In the best case, the issue with much of that knowledge is similar to that of French thought in Viktor Pelevin's short story "The Macedonian Critique of the French Thought" (Pelevin 2003) — for an instant it makes you almost believe that there might be a point to it. Lack of substance in knowledge products is not a narrowly French issue. It may equally well be a Macedonian problem, or if not that, then at least a Slovenian one. This is how Terry Eagleton sees the products of the most renowned contemporary Slovenian thinker Slavoj Žižek:

> Žižek himself is both dauntingly prolific and dazzlingly versatile, able to leap in a paragraph from Hegel to *Jurassic Park*, Kafka to the Ku Klux Klan; but just as Lacan's fantasy-ridden world of everyday reality conceals an immutable kernel of the Real, so Žižek's flamboyant parade of topics recircles, in book after book, to this very same subject. The almost comic versatility of his interests masks a compulsive repetition of the same (Eagleton 2003, p. 197).

As a sign of prophetic premonition, George Orwell might have delivered a final judgment on Balkanese and other versions of the post-modern thought even before the intellectual bankruptcy of the old world had given the birth

to it. Although he obviously had noticed the pain Europa, the labouring mother, suffered of. What he says about the English language equally applies to other minor and major languages equally:

> A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more because he drinks. It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language. It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language make it easier to have foolish thoughts (Orwell 1945/2002, p. 954).

The problem, as pointed by Sebald (2003) in the case of German literature after the fall of the Nazi regime resonates more broadly with the European intellectual climate during the second half of the 20th century:

> When a morally compromised author claims the field of aesthetics as a value-free area it should make readers to stop and think. (Sebald 2003, p. 131)

The same applies equally to human as well as social sciences that in attempt to remain 'value-free' ended up supporting fascist and communist politics. Just becoming irrelevant, as the recent trends seem to be suggesting, does not appear as a particularly good approach to restoring the intellectual integrity of arts and sciences.

Since the fall of state-socialism one can notice a somewhat exotic version of post-modern thought emerging in Tajikistan, a country that uses as her official medium of communication a Russified version of the Persian language written in Cyrillic script. Over the past decade or so, a Žižekuesque version of Russian philosophical language has also been created, not entirely without the influence of thinkers or not so much, from Western-Balkans, at the time when the country's sporty leader still seems to be hesitating whether to return to leadership traditions established by Joseph Stalin or to move on and adopt the way of Augusto Pinochet. One of the sites in Russia where the full use of the opportunity to cultivate 'advanced western thought' is being made is the Smolny College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the country's first Liberal Arts college established by the Philology Department of the St. Petersburg State University Russia in partnership with the Bard College in New York. Despite the American connections, not all of which is immaterial by nature, minds gathered at Smolny College feel much closer to Paris than New York. Remembering that while for the Soviet intellectuals between 1917 and 1989 Paris was accessible only after time in GULAG and deportation (Andrei Sinyavskii would offer a good example here) and that in contrast to that for the Yugoslavian knowledge workers Paris had been open and its opportunities well used for most of the time of Tito's rule after World War II, would allow one to see how the ideas of responding to the shame of the intellectuals for

not standing up against fascism and communism have moved around Europe. Mr. Putin of Russia, Mr. Rakhmanov of Tajikistan and other strong leaders in Europe, Asia and elsewhere should be well pleased with such a development. Nothing this new social and philosophical thinking reveals even to those few who take the trouble of digging through the heavy verbiage under which its small ideas a buried, threatens their authoritarian ambitions. And if nothing else, another trip to Paris helps washing away the remnants of shame.

Edward Said has his own view on what constitutes the main source of the problems with postmodern thought recently so intensively discussed — complacency and intellectual laziness of its adherents:

> I've always thought that Lyotard and his followers are admitting their own lazy incapacities, perhaps even indifference, rather than giving a correct assessment of what remains for the intellectual a truly vast array of opportunities despite postmodernism (Said 1996, p. 18).

The ultimate irony of European knowledge production is that it is not here that success is being determined, but across the Atlantic — in the mass universities of the United States that mediate the *sophisticated* European thought to the rest of the world, including re-exporting it back to Europe. In the character of the protagonist of his novel "White Noise", Prof. Jack A.K. Gladney, Don DeLillo has captured the heart of American higher education, which Europe intends to challenge on the world knowledge markets by implementing the Bologna Process:

> I am chairman of the department of Hitler studies at the College-on-the-Hill. I invented Hitler studies in North America in March of 1968. … When I suggested to the chancellor that we might build a whole department around Hitler's life and work, he was quick to see the possibilities. It was an immediate and electrifying success (DeLillo 1984, p. 4).

Opening a Department of Prince Charles Studies would perhaps take the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom one step further in the direction that the European Commission expects all of European higher education to move.

We do not know for sure how much knowledge is offered in books like those by Žižek, or in all the new *studies* — Hitler, Elvis, Gender, Britney, etc., although one might suggest that the volume of pages typed-up (or copied and pasted) is not a fully adequate indicator of any growth in knowledge, and even less so in demonstrating the progress made in advancing human understanding on issues fundamental to its existence. Flows are sustained by hordes of knowledge intermediaries such as consultants who travel with briefcases full

of freshly squeesed snake oil, developing 'projects' out of simplified versions of recent theories, for example on creation of social capital to be funded by the World Bank that destroy all social networks in the way, or fight corruption by corrupting entire communities and countries.

Consultants, writes Neave,

> serve to empty the wastepaper basket and thus ensure the ideas of others are recycled, sometimes repackaged and rarely recognised by their original creators (2004a, p. 1).

It is almost fifty years since Jacques Barzun lamented that the literary genre most commonly practised by academics was the grant proposal (Barzun 1959/2002), making no secret either of the expected outcome of this:

> The world has long observed that small acts of immorality, if repeated, will destroy character. It is equally manifest, though never said, that uttering nonsense and half-truth without cease ends by destroying Intellect (p. 50).

To afford this, the world does not seem to be lacking in either funds or ignorance. We may actually have a shortage of knowledge, but this poses no problem as long as those in the position to express that view can be kept quiet by writing grant applications and reports, or busy doing other things like drafting policy papers, rote lecturing to undergraduate students or theorising post-modernally.

2.1 Knowledgeable society

Daniel Bell in his classic "The Coming of Post-Industrial Society" stresses two aspects of the *knowledge society*. First, that in the knowledge society "the sources of innovation are increasingly derivative from research and development" (Bell 1974, p. 212); and second, that "the weight of the society — measured by a larger proportion of Gross National Product and a larger share of employment — is increasingly in the knowledge field" (ibid.). Even thirty years on, both of these aspects remain perfectly valid. However, when comparing with some earlier conceptualisations of the knowledge society, it becomes obvious that Bell's knowledge society does not necessarily advance human understanding of fundamental issues, either natural or social. Back in 1966 Robert E. Lane wrote:

> As a first approximation to a definition, the knowledgeable society is one in which, more than other societies, its members: (a) inquire into the

> basis of their beliefs about man, nature and society; (b) are guided (perhaps unconsciously) by objective standards of veridical truth, and, at upper levels of education, follow scientific rules of evidence and inference in inquiry; (c) devote considerable resources to this enquiry and thus have a large store of knowledge; (d) collect, organise and interpret their knowledge in a constant effort to extract meaning for the purposes at hand; (e) employ this knowledge to illuminate (and perhaps modify) their values and goals as well as advance them (quoted in Bell 1974, p. 176).

The issue, first with Bell and then the other knowledge society gurus that followed him, seems to be that while stressing the importance of knowledge for economic growth, they ignore its intellectual element—the very meaning of the knowledge and its impact on our identity and values. As we have discussed elsewhere (Tomusk 2004a), the marginalisation of philosophy is primarily accountable for the situation in which scientists and engineers demonstrate their growing eagerness to free mankind from the burden of its worldly existence by up-loading the contents of our brains onto memory chips and launching them into space to travel for eternity.

Knowledge, as we are told in these days of the stakeholder, ought to have a practical value. Knowledge should support the solving of our 'problems'; if not, then its value should be even more direct — one should be able to exchange knowledge directly for cash. Bernstein (2000) has expressed the latter point as clearly as anybody possibly could:

> Of fundamental significance, there is a new concept of knowledge and of its relation to those who create and use it. This new concept is a truly secular concept. Knowledge should flow like money to wherever it can create advantage and profit. Indeed knowledge is not like money, it *is* money. Knowledge is divorced from people, their commitments and their personal dedication. These become impediments, restrictions on the flow of knowledge, and introduce impediments in the working of the symbolic market. Moving knowledge about, or even creating it, should not be more difficult than moving and regulating money. Knowledge, after nearly a thousand years is divorced from inwardness and literally dehumanised (p. 86).

Our universities are expected to produce problem-solvers in a somewhat naïve belief that problems are objectively given to us as, or so it seems that Sir Karl Popper thought, and that the institution of science is responsible for this. One does not need, however, to leave the industrial West too far behind to understand that, for example, the concept of a risk society has different meanings to different groups in different locations and carry very little

meaning to the groups on the bottom as well as on the top of the social hierarchies. This concept, like many others, has been coined by middle-class academics who write theory out of their own social milieu. Exactly why and to whom is the *digital divide* a major problem when neither a software engineer in Mumbai nor a poor in nearby shantytown have access to clean water is not always easy to grasp.

Scientists tend to remain romantic about their profession and the contribution it makes to our common good. Elkana, for example, argues from a position on high, what Passmore (1978) calls "aristoscience":

> Science is autonomous, value free and as objective as one can ever get, once its problems have been formulated, and practitioners are working towards solutions (Elkana 1989, p. 186).

Passmore characterized such position a decade earlier:

> When the aristoscientist talks about social questions, one is often struck, rather by his sociological naivete, his refusal to believe that it takes work to find out what is happening in the society (Passmore 1978, p. 57).

Elkana's argument, if valid, is not something that should instil pride, rather be a source of sadness: the understanding that by lending out their cognitive capacities to those who compile the lists of problems to be solved scientists have lost their role as intellectuals.

In the same vein, a psychologist in her naïveté may truly believe that by studying a recently popular phenomenon such as emotional intelligence she is contributing to the fundamental understanding of human nature, only to find out that those who fund such research are interested in the results as long as they can be used practically in the selection of personnel — to identify individuals who are nice, but not necessarily too smart to join a particular *team* (Haefliger 2004). One may also think that the reason behind the Ford Foundation's support of research on private higher education world-wide is motivated by the conviction that such research helps us to understand the functioning of human society. One should, however, acknowledge that since the concept of private higher education is a broad one, a hefty grant helps considerably in consolidating it and making it a part of the language we speak. The enthusiasm by which governments and international agencies welcomed Burton Clark's book on the entrepreneurial university (Clark 1998) a few years ago falls into the same category, as the rushing of higher education researchers and consultants to exploit that enthusiasm indicates.

By selectively supporting research in certain areas, funding agencies have gained significant role negotiating the language the learned classes speak. Since the world is held together by words, as Louis Wirth (1936/1968) suggested, those who decide what is to be studied, written and published do, to a large extent, decide what kind of a world we inhabit. Science, as much as it explores the reality around us, also constructs it.

Entrepreneurial social scientists who wish or are forced by their universities to milk every cow to the last drop, are at the same time losing their critical function to negotiate the nature of the reality surrounding us. To argue otherwise, one must be able to show a research report concluding that a topic has been exhausted or is not worth any further study. "The intellectual class," argues Barzun "which ought always to remain independent, even of Intellect, has been captivated by art, overawed by science, and seduced by philanthropy" (1956/2002, p. 28).

2.2 Intellectuals and knowledge workers

As they are transformed into knowledge workers, the fundamental identity of the individuals who carry intellectual responsibilities in our societies is irreversibly changing. Or to put it more precisely—the process by which universities first absorbed intellectuals during the second half of the twentieth century, and then transformed them into workers in the knowledge-production industry has decimated the class of independent intellectuals (Jacoby 1987/2000). By developing such an argument we obviously assume that only a small part of all cognitive activities qualify as intellectual. A science aristocrat doing routine laboratory experiments would certainly not qualify; neither would an even extremely skilful stockbroker. On the other hand, a *samizdat* author in the Soviet Union, to whom only the lowest grade of manual employment was available, say that of a stoker, would qualify as one, perhaps the only type of intellectual under the Soviet régime. For us, moving and regulating knowledge like money, as Bernstein suggests, has no particular intellectual value; just the opposite, any intellectual engagement is necessarily *closely related* to "persons, their commitments, their personal dedications".

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

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

It should come as little surprise that, as the economy has become war by *other means*, to paraphrase von Clausewitz, everyone is expected to become a foot-soldier in the global economic war, with university as the military academy. Delsol offers a sobering explanation of how the global economic regime transforms societies into massive armies:

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

In such a world we no longer ask 'What is true', but only 'How can we live better'. Obviously, 'living better' will mean different things to different people, and having broad-band access to the Internet is not exactly what the world's most needy people dream of, although we view it as a universal blessing on the assumption that what makes Mr. Gates richer should be good for everybody. But even in this task—showing a way to a better life, that is, how to achieve *growth*—the intellectual cum knowledge worker has but a poor performance record to demonstrate. Immanuel Wallerstein believes that the time of growth as we have learned experience it is pretty much over, and that the coming twenty-five to fifty years will bring forth a new world-order:

> I believe there exists today, as a result of long secular trends that have been moving away from the equilibrium, a massive policy squeeze that will block the continuation of an endless accumulation of capital, the motor of capitalist development (Wallerstain 2004, p. 50).

We live in an era which Wallerstein calls a *systemic crisis*. To support Wallerstein's thesis, Geoffry Garrett (2004) argues that while economic globalisation makes the rich richer and even poor countries receive access to additional resources as a result of out-sourcing production and services from the developed countries, middle-income countries that are not smart enough to compete on the knowledge production front and are too rich to sell cheap labour enjoy no benefit and move toward impoverishment.

Systemic crisis entails possible risks, as well as opportunities. Among the latter one can find an opportunity to move cognitive work onto an intellectual ground, noticing that "there is no search for truth that does not involve arguments about the good and beautiful" (Wallerstein 2004, p. 57). Wallerstein has been particularly disappointed in the products, or rather lack of them, of social scientists, particularly academic economists:

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

He is perhaps right in arguing that the number of social problems social scientists have solved over the past century and a half is not an impressive one. For him the solution lies on a radical reform of social sciences. One might, however, ask to what extent it is realistic to expect social scientists to act as critical intellectuals in the public sphere, produce knowledge, teach students and draft and evaluate policies. The outcome of the involvement of critical intellectuals in policy development, as Michael Young (Young 2004) demonstrates in the case of South African educational policy, easily leads to disappointments. The uncompromising position of the intellectual is good neither for policy development nor politics. Engaging in those areas puts the integrity of intellectuals at risk. Policies are always to be negotiated on political grounds; however, truth politically negotiated can be seen as truth by nobody aware of the process of its creation. While in his time, Karl Mannheim thought it possible to combine intellectual responsibilities, science and politics (see e.g. Mannheim 1936/1968), on this point we would rather agree with Barzun (1959/2002) who, while arguing for the intellectual freedom of intellectuals, also understands that the house of intellect has its limits, both regarding the tasks it can undertake without compromising its identity, as well as its sheer size. An intellectual is, after all, a dangerous creature:

> The servant of truth seems always ready to kill: the mild scholar lives to destroy his colleague with a theory, and this fratricide is his duty and title to fame (Barzun 1956/2002, p. 176).

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

unfavourable light: as problem-solvers they face the threat of being irrelevant, as intellectuals being corrupt.

2.3 Intellectual and the University

Intellectuals, as Shils (1969) tells us, have existed at all times and in all societies. What separates our period from many others is the fact that moving knowledge and intellect directly into the economic realm has encouraged many individuals with little or no particular talent in the area, to aspire to the status of an intellectual. Particularly during the second half of the twentieth century, the rapidly growing higher education sector has encouraged massive mobility into the knowledgeable classes. Still, as Ryan and Sackrey argue, for newcomers the paradise of *vita contemplativa* may not necessarily offer the status and privileges comparable with those of the times when higher education was the privilege of the few endowed economically or otherwise, rather than an entitlement of the masses:

> Thus, the university looks more like a knowledge factory, and an increased percentage of the professoriate shares a degree of vulnerability and exploitation comparable to a Greyhound bus driver or a line worker in a shoe factory (Ryan, Sackrey 1996, p. 98).

To remain fair, university has always been a somewhat problematic home for intellectuals, at least as long as by this we do not mean all possible types of cognitive workers, including those whose ethos runs close to those representing the oldest profession men can remember. Instead, what we mean by the task of the *intellectual* in the context of the current paper comes from an earlier piece by Dahrendorf:

> all intellectuals have the duty to doubt everything that is obvious, to make relative all authority, to ask all those questions that no one else dares to ask (Dahrendorf 1969, p. 51).

These people, as Dahrendorf suggests, are not affected by society's "gradations and careers, its privileges and petty quarrels."(ibid., p. 50). They are, as Alfred Weber has suggested *freischwebende Intelligenz*—free-floating intellectuals—a relatively classless stratum in society (Mannheim 1936/1968, p. 155).

Anybody who has seen a contemporary university from within knows that petty quarrels and struggles over careers and privileges do not leave too many of its members intact. As such, the university's ability to offer a site for independent intellectual discourse is easily compromised. It is compromised each time any of its members thinks what can and what cannot be said, and what impact that might have on one's chances of receiving tenure

or being awarded a distinction, of becoming dean, head of a school, etc. Fuller argues that the freedom academics are believed to be enjoying in their universities has been grossly over-estimated. In his view control is the very idea behind the modern university as invented by Wilhelm von Humboldt:

> Faced with the inadequacy of the old feudal-clerical order's response to Napoleon, Wilhelm von Humboldt came up with the inspired idea of co-opting intellectuals, many of whom had been sympathetic to Napoleon, by declaring the university the natural home of 'Enlightenment'. In one fell swoop, free-floating gadflies were flattened into civil servants (Fuller 2000, p. 83).

Particularly since the years of Cold War expansion, the university has served a purpose similar to that of a safety valve on a pressure-cooker through which the excess steam created by intellectuals, that might otherwise have stirred up the masses, is safely and slowly released (ibid., p. 51). Accommodating possible troublemakers in the home of Enlightenment has allowed the channelling of their cognitive abilities and energy to non-destructive purposes such as matching military-related scientific efforts with similar efforts on the ideological front by promoting an unquestionable liberal orthodoxy. In his new role as a knowledge worker, an intellectual has become the ideologue, having lost his ability:

> to step back and gain perspective with regard to contemporary expressions of our mode of government, in such a way as to understand its weaknesses, and subsequently to correct them (Delsol 2003, p. 102).

It took the university approximately a century to safely sublimate the critical impulse that animated Voltaire and Marx "in the cramped prose of Max Weber" (Fuller 2000, p. 77). With taking the university to the market place the nature of control over knowledge workers has changed. It is increasingly the economic value that determines the importance of academic work. In this sense, one would probably agree with Readings (1996) that political control over academics has been loosened as long as they are able to sell increasing amounts of increasingly *excellent* knowledge on the market. Market success serves as the main criterion of excellence. Thinking of a market as a site where a large number of relatively ignorant individuals exchange their hard earned cash for the goods they desire may, however, suggest a gap between market success and the excellence of knowledge products.

The life of intellectuals, even those belonging to a university, has never been an easy one. So we read of the Rev. Simon Ockley, the first great Arabist in the early eighteenth-century University of Cambridge:

> [Simon Ockley] was writing to [James Keith] from Cambridge Castle, the debtor's prison to which he had been committed in February of the preceding year; the sum he owed was £200, and as his annual stipend from the professorship was only £40, … the prospect of an early release must have been somewhat bleak. Thanks to Keith and other influential admirers his debts were presently paid and he was free to return to Swavesay. But his health and spirit were alike broken, and on August 9, 1720, he died, being forty-two years of age (Arberry, 1960/1997, p. 11).

More than ever before, during the second half of the twentieth century intellectuals—persons with an unusual sensitivity to the sacred, an uncommon reflectiveness about the nature of their universe, and the rules which govern their society (Shils, 1969, p. 26)—have been absorbed in the university, challenging their natural inclinations for critical inquiry with the imposed tasks of industrial production of knowledge, noise and plain propaganda. Noam Chomsky tells us of America's first propaganda agency—the Committee on Public Information which is to be understood as 'public disinformation':

> Run by leading progressive intellectuals, its task was to turn the pacifist population into hysterical jingoists and enthusiasts for war against the savage Huns (Chomsky 2002, p. 179).

Although debtor's prisons no longer exist, this does not necessarily mean more freedom. Post-modern writing can be seen as the contemporary equivalent of the Cambridge Castle[1] where Cacodaemons haunted Simon Ockley. Compiling *analytical reports* to the European Commission on the implementation of the Bologna Process is perhaps as tormenting an experience for any intelligent human being than that which the Rev. Ockley suffered for his debts.

Taking a turn towards lower levels of abstraction and more practicality, something any reader of this humble volume of an applied social science background may well appreciate, we will now take a quick look at the toils of knowledge workers in the field of higher education research. Although perhaps not entirely conclusive, this small test could perhaps still shed some light on the intellectual commitment and practical value of the works in our own camp of labour. Teichler's recent paper (Teichler 2003) echoes some of the issues raised by Wallerstein and indicates the relevance of his arguments in the context of higher education research. According to Teichler, higher education research has been a growing field over recent decades, and those

[1] This point I owe with thanks to Prof. Guy Neave.

involved in it act concurrently as consultants, institutional researchers and administrators (p. 178). However, it is not obvious what this precisely means. Could it be about the growing attractiveness of higher education researchers for many jobs in the city of intellect or the knowledge factory, and also for administrative responsibilities? Rather than, as it was until recently, simply to occupy academic positions in sociology, political science and economics departments, as Teichler seems to be assuming; or do we actually see a reverse causal connection—representatives of a growing number of previously non-academic professional categories claiming academic, if not intellectual status in an attempt to elevate their professional standing by developing publication records and lists of conference talks for their Curriculum Vitae? This, as we well know, is often the case with provosts from the College-on-the-Hill presenting their old war stories for the latest innovations in the field. Be that as it may, the result is not exactly satisfying:

> Most analyses emerging are so strongly shaped by the high expectations that they are somewhat blind to the possible 'mixed performance' which tends to show up in the implementation process of reforms (ibid. p. 178).

At this juncture, one might wish to ask Professor Teichler what it means to be *somewhat blind*? It sounds almost as good as suggesting that somebody be *somewhat pregnant*, say, three and a half per cent, for example. His statement is obviously an expression of professional solidarity, an attempt to say politely that learned colleagues had failed to see that their research has drifted away from reality and is no longer, if it ever was, in a position to inform the once-again unsuccessful reforms. As Wallerstein argues, this failure has deep epistemological roots. The conceptual apparatus applied has a high expectation built into it, so that failure has become inexpressible. One could also make an argument for newly born administrator-researchers being neither fully competent researchers nor fully responsible intellectuals. Finally, it cannot be ruled out that maintaining high expectations is the very aim of much of social science research, a direct expression of the interests of the scientists themselves. Systematically cultivated high expectations keep the funding streams alive and politicians whose programmes receive scientific legitimisation satisfied. Unfortunately, such research fails to see beyond itself being merely, as Teichler suggests, *l'art pour l'art*. Perhaps not the aesthetically most satisfying art one could possibly find.

Multiple identity as described by Teichler allows the creation of a need for certain kinds of knowledge, supposedly applied and closely policy-relevant while ignoring theoretical and conceptual work that would require more solid preparation, or critical discourses that might not necessarily yield cash flow. Policy research to manufacture a discourse of permanent progress

is, however, a safe genre both in social sciences in general, as well as in higher education research.

3. THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM OF THE BOLOGNA PROGRAM

Public Man, Sennett tells us, who walked the streets of the great European cities of London and Paris in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has fallen (Sennett 1977). In his stead we now have the holder of the Master of Business Administration degree. Instead of culture the MBA stands for its antithesis. It reminds us that the ultimate truth of the society we inhabit — the dissemination of which is being perceived as a sign of irreversible progress, and not only in the offices of the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund — is that *Greed is good*. Without greed there is no growth, no progress (Gellner 1994). Democracy requires a plus-sum game, growing public wealth so that even those moving downwards on the social hierarchy to allow the masses to contemplate the way up should not feel too badly hurt and give rise to hordes of young Marxes, Trotskys and Lenins.

The reduction of the great *theatrum mundi* to the battlefield of global economic competition leaves little space for intellectuals, parasites on society who are in such pain thinking about other things, that they do not have the slightest intention of becoming economically productive. Mass mobilisation in the global economic war requires everybody to become a soldier on both fronts—production and consumption. While in communist Eastern Europe failing to participate in socialist production was labelled as anti-social behaviour, under global capitalism, avoiding consumption constitutes a far worse act of sabotage against society's interests, even threatening the liberal-democratic order. Higher education, as we have already argued, has become one of the expensive services every good citizen is expected to consume to keep the economy growing, even if the dreams of gaining upward social mobility through higher education degrees are being frustrated at an accelerating speed. Lifelong learning, so much spoken about recently, merely institutionalizes the obligation to consume education, not to learn — humans always learn as long as they live. Neave perceives this shift in higher education in following the terms:

> This is the transition of higher education from being considered as a subset of the political system—the selection of, formation and enculturation

> of elites—to its redefinition as a sub-set of the economic system—the training of the mass for the private sector labour market (Neave 2004b, p. 8).

In our view, here the *Magister Ludi* of European higher education discourse fails to see one important element — while the level of educational attainment is rising significantly, new and higher degrees do not necessarily stand for knew knowledge and skills that the labour marker receives, but is one of the symptoms of what Dore (1976/2000) called the *diploma disease*, and Collins described in his classic "The Credential Society" a few years later (Collins 1979) as the proliferation of the level of *sold* degrees in the context of the relatively stable content of studies. Through this process educational experience has been decoupled from the symbols that once represented it, and although every symbol makes a pretence of standing for something far greater than itself, the very notion of an institutionalised status and symbols related to it contradict, in a rather fundamental manner, the market democracy. Mass higher education is being asked to provide the impossible: exclusive degrees available to everybody at a reasonable cost and without too much hassle. Obviously, in such a manner level after level of institutionalised symbols—bachelor, master, doctoral degrees are being drained of value, with the latter being defined according to Bourdieu (1989) as a correlate of relative rarity, with new exclusive symbols being established, following the same market demand.

The Bologna Process offers through the Tuning project a somewhat naïve solution, rather than trying to fill symbols with significant content, it is trying to lower existing institutions by reducing higher education qualifications to a laundry list of skills and competencies (Tomusk 2004b). Although it may appear to be a solution to the problem of empty symbols, it can be opposed on economic and cultural grounds, as well as on that of cognitive psychology (Tomusk 2003).

Although they are few in number, there are still those who imagine a university that does not reduce humans to their capacity of industrial production. Ben Okri has recently shared his hopes for the university of the future:

> The academies of the future will do one thing we do not do today. They will teach the art of self-discovery. There is nothing more fundamental in education. We turn out students from our universities who know how to give answers, but not how to ask questions. The wisdom centres in our culture do not reach our students. They leave universities with skills for the workplace, but no knowledge of how to live, or what living is for. They are not taught how to see. They are not taught how to listen. They

> are not taught the great art of obedience, and how it precedes self-mastery. They are not taught the true art of reading (Okri 2003, p. 8).

Okri is very clear about what most of the universities do with the majority of their students:

> We take the living potential that are young minds and turn them, reduce them into job-fillers and economy providers (ibid.).

This clashes sharply with his deep conviction that "we are more than the functions and jobs that we do." While we sympathise with his hopes for a more meaningful future for our children, there is no sign on the horizon that might auger a better future to come. Delsol has made it abundantly clear that the current generation has already learned not to ask questions. As she argues, asking those fundamental questions that Okri insists our children should be asking, threatens the fundamentals of our security, which most probably are illusory anyway.

> [A life] is paradoxically worth something only to the extent that it admits itself not to be supreme value, by recognising what is worth more that itself, by its ability to organise itself around something else (Delsol 2003, p. 4).

Life that does not signify anything but itself is, one might say, in-significant. What should be thought of a life that has become a symbol of something considerably less than itself would be unethical to express.

Policy developments we can see in European higher education in the wake of signing the Bologna Declaration in 1999 suggest that what we have seen so far is but a humble beginning to a radical shift in the opposite direction to Okri's vision.

3.1 Propagandists of New Europe

There is no necessity for the project of creating the European Higher Education Area to take a radically anti-intellectual shape, as it currently seems to be doing. One may even suggest that spending a few units of the common currency might wisely allow some people *with an unusual sensitivity to the sacred and an uncommon reflectiveness*, as Shils (1969) suggested, to engage significant intellectual tasks which otherwise could not be pursued. Though it may well be the case that — as was in 18th century Cambridge where supporting writing letters was not in the interests of too many benefactors — in the same manner, generating propaganda is perceived a more honourable task among those controlling the purse in Brussels.

The issue with cognitively well-endowed individuals is that they can be useful to a society in many ways. Their abilities can be used for creating technologies of life as much as of death, to engage in science as well as in politics, to promote virtue as well as vice. Society may appreciate all of these functions of the intellect, some perhaps more explicitly than others, meaning that the material rewards from the latter tend to be particularly high. In an era when roles are being reduced to functions, the threat is that the moral ground of all the roles is disappearing and an intellectual, for example, may well wish to take on the job of politician.

Newton-Smith (2000) draws our attention to the unbridgeable ethical cleavage between certain cognitively demanding professions:

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

A position as the one expressed by Newton-Smith may belong to a scientist as an expression of an empirical fact, but not to an intellectual who, for ethical reasons, cannot agree with such a miserable state of affairs. While in the world of Newton-Smith Leon Trotsky can find his well-deserved ecological niche, for our hypothetical intellectual both should remain anomalies — the morally corrupt one, as well as the one who approves degradations.

Turning to the rapidly growing body of *Bologna literature*, one may notice that borders between the genres are increasingly blurred. Under that are the politically motivated declarations: Magna Charta Universitatum (CRE 1988), the Sorbonne Declaration (Declaration 1998) and the Bologna Declaration (Declaration 1999). On that fundament lies a second layer of political documents: communiqués of bi-annual ministerial meetings. Beyond that blurring begins: Declarations of the European University Association's conventions constitute the first level of an attempt to reconcile what Neave (2002) calls the "*pays politique*" and the "*pays real*", that is, the political discourse and institutional realities of European higher education perhaps not fully appreciating the inevitable imperfection of the outcome of any such attempt. The *Trend* reports, officially called "Trends in Learning Structures in European Higher Education" (see e.g. Reichert and Tauch 2003), represent, at least formally, a move in a different direction, an attempt to inform the political process from the actual state of affairs in European universities as related to various issues of implementation of the Bologna Process. On the top of all of that cognitive production stand the works of the

academics who by claiming the status of intellectuals represent the ambition of presenting the naked truth in its entire Apollonian beauty. Contrary to their, one may assume, entirely sincere intentions, His Majesty has been dressed in the most eclectic mix of brands and styles that any fashion designer could imagine.

This production carries signs of compromise and it often presents political declarations in the place of descriptions of the actual state of affairs and boosts high expectations while ignoring the inevitably mixed nature of the outcomes. Among the recent Bologna literature we find, for example, a progress report (Zgaga 2003) compiled by somebody who has burdened his earthly existence with two incompatible roles: those of academic and politician. The report, which is a mix of political declarations and attempts at objective analysis, in itself indicates the apparent cognitive dissonance caused by Destiny's evil experiment to lock in a single skull the minds of both a Professor of Educational Studies and a Minister of Education.

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

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

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

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

While there are theories other than moral corruption available to explain the views expressed in the *Zgaga Report* and similar documents, the situation is somewhat different looking at writings on Bologna of academics functioning as academics. That leads us to another of Neave's observations, that:

> In the absence of counter comments, even the most scholarly and balanced piece of research finds great difficulty in distancing itself from propaganda (ibid.).

The way Neave expresses his position is similar to Teichler (2003, p. 178), to the effect that some researchers are oftentimes *somewhat blind* to certain aspects of certain issues. A recent article by Huisman and Wende that appeared in a learned journal (Huisman and Wende 2004) as a result of an EU funded project suggests that the reason for academics presenting propaganda as research outcomes lies neither in a limited visual impairment nor an absence of critical comments, but rather directly induced by the *Queen's shilling*.

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

> In less than 10 years, harmonisation (preferably labelled as 'convergence') of higher education structures changed from an undesirable objective to a highly advisable aim (Huisman and Wende 2004, p. 350).

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

One should obviously not push too far the comparison between the European Union as a federal super-state in the making and the Soviet Union as a federal super-state gone by, although certain similarities, starting with a top-heavy bureaucracy are too visible to ignore. As are the intentions of the enthusiasts of both the constructions. As in the days of yore, Huisman and

Wende appreciate the enthusiasm of the European nation states embracing the Union's intervention in an area for which it does not even have a mandate — higher education (see e.g. Tomusk 2004b) — and is therefore, strictly speaking, illegal:

> We have maintained that the presumed lack of national governments' acceptance of inter- or supranational interference is not as profound as expected (Huisman and Wende 2004, p. 355).

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

> Fuelled both by the general expectations of the European Commission pleading a European dimension in higher education, but maybe even more by the education policy reviews of OECD, national governments to a considerable extent realised (albeit subjectively) whether their national higher education system was still sufficiently in line with a certain (European) model, even though such an ideal model might never be attainable or might even not be existent in practice (Huisman and Wende 2004, p. 351)

Asking for the meaning of *a national government's subjective realisation* would be certainly perceived as a malicious act. It is obvious that the phrase is devoid of meaning if analysed from the point of view of political science or educational policy. H.G. Wells, back in 1935, wrote exactly about using such phrases, seeing nations, or for this matter, governments, as personalities:

> That sort of thing seems to me a romantic simplification of what is really happening in human affairs, and I think it leads to disastrous results (Wells 1935).

Adding a reference to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, seeing the ever-present but still lacking *European model* in terms of an *empty signifier* would make this paper a good match to some other post-modern writings. However, as such a reference is missing, this option is not available. What remains is an option to choose between the two alternatives Jacques Barzun has offered, either a reflection of the *ignorance of the unlettered* or of the *anti-intellectualism of the intellectual*. There is no doubt that by instigating the production of such texts and reports, which fail to draw a line between political propaganda and intellectual analysis or have been written with the simple aim of pleasing the funding agency, the Bologna Process is not only corrupting the intellectual sphere, but is also eroding the integrity of the scholarship within universities, as well as beyond them.

3.2 De-intellectualisation through Tuning Educational Structures

In the context of economic globalisation and the shift of the global economic focus from the North Atlantic region to the Pacific Rim, it should not come as a surprise that, despite everything said about the glorious traditions of European higher education and the great cultural treasures of the continent, economic concerns occupy a prominent place among the driving forces of the Bologna Process. The difficulty of funding mass higher education from the public purse is a strong motivation for the European Commission, as well as many national governments, to try to move universities closer to the marketplace. That would allow a gradual increase in cost-sharing with European students, as well as more aggressive recruitment of students from other countries such as China and India who would then be expected to bear the full cost of *the educational service*. Gaining a market-share from US universities, with the commensurate additional stream of cash into European higher education, is in our view the most important reason for the European Commission's intense interest in presiding over the Process. In her recent article Langan leaves little space for any ambiguity:

> As a response to US dominance in higher education, France and other European countries are therefore utilising Bologna to not only develop international activities and bilateral agreements between institutions but also to create commercial activities such as the export of educational products and services (Langan 2004, p. 449).

Harnessing Bologna like a horse to the carriage of European economics is not an easy task. It entails significant political compromises: on the one hand opening, under pressure from students and academics who are both concerned about their own economic security, a futile discussion about the social dimension of higher education as a safety valve on the pressure cooker to release excess steam from the Process; and on the other hand, creating *the Bologna brand* that from the outset establishes by political means a relatively equal level of quality in higher education provided across the signatory countries — from the United Kingdom to the Russian Federation — which obviously does not correspond with the reality.

Winning temporary peace on two fronts allows the architects of the process to pursue the main task of the Process — transforming European higher education into knowledge products that can be sold on the global marketplace. This agenda more than anything else reveals the love-hate relationship Europe has with US higher education. While it envies the latter for its resources, it hates the means — markets and a low-level of regulation — that has allowed it. Europe, having its hands tied politically, has to achieve global market

success by the non-market means of using political and technocratic tools. In this the European response as it emerges from the Bologna Process more closely resembles the Hungarian reform socialism of the 1970s — in which the Socialist Party, in an attempt to invigorate production, decided to produce the *market signals* itself — than a free market economy in which, in addition to winners, losers also abound. While the free market demands a wide range of products, allowing both high and low quality universities and colleges to operate in their niches, and a rare free-floating spirit to remain alive within it, the European approach designed by technocrats in Brussels and politicians from various countries threatens the imposition of the ethos of industrial production upon the entire higher education sector, thus reducing it to the level of the lowest common denominator.

It is surprising how close the logic of such policies is to those of the Soviet Bolsheviks since 1920s: collectivising, industrialising, and electrifying the country. As soon as politics take over the market, party-technocrats begin designing their great-leap-forward type of utopian programs, as the Soviet Union had been catching-up with the United States since Khrushchev, now the European Union attempts the same by almost the same means. The Tuning project constitutes a perfect example of such policy.

The Tuning project funded by the European Commission constitutes a bold move to reach the core of higher education by ignoring the historical safe-guard of its autonomy — the nation-state:

> The Tuning project does not pay attention to educational systems, but to educational *structures* and *content of studies* (Gonzáles and Wagenaar 2003 p. 22).

Its logic is to develop professional profiles for a range of European professions in seven subject areas: business, chemistry, education science, geology, history, mathematics and physics (ibid. p. 32). Each profile is to be attributed a list of generic and subject-related competencies (ibid. p. 24) which are to be delivered by means of ECTS credits that allow both transfer and accumulation of credits.

Implementing that would mean transforming European higher education into a massive shopping mall of higher education, where a student can walk from one university to another, travel between countries and buy credits filled with competencies. Having collected a sufficient number of credits, a student can approach the checkout and demand a degree in exchange for a shopping list of competencies. Institutionalising a European Curriculum Vita, another tool of bureaucratic control promoted by the European Commission (Zgaga 2003, p. 13), allows the imposition of a forced knowledge consumption

régime on every European citizen throughout their professional careers as the actual implementation of the lifelong learning program.

A few final words regarding the anti-intellectualism of the Tuning project. We identify three such sources: first, the Tuning project seems to borrow its logic from vocational education, something the EU actually does have a mandate for, as well as experience in. But clearly, this approach entirely ignores the needs of more academically and intellectually inclined branches of higher learning. It is driving European universities towards the narrow preparation of interchangeable job-fillers, instead of allowing personal growth and the emergence of individuals with strong intellectual commitment, people concerned about the meaning of things and carrying *values*; second is the motivation of making European universities attractive to students from other parts of world as a tourist destination. It appears to invite a relatively small number of extremely affluent students from developing countries to walk from one university to another, enjoy the sites and sounds — as the Cable News Network advertises tourism to a variety of countries — and on the top of that receive a university degree sporting the European brand-name. For us, promoting such an agenda, even if economically successful, equates to loss of intellectual integrity. Finally, as a utopian project, the Bologna Process and the Tuning project as one of its expressions:

> implies a reckless heaping-up and insatiable gathering-in, and unbounded *cumulation* of advantages, with the counterpart of balancing and circumscribing drawbacks shut out, extruded from the field of consciousness (Kolnai 1960/1999, p. 125).

As we have seen thus far, and as Neave has confirmed in his critical comments (see e.g. Neave 2003), the Bologna Process includes a number of irresolvable contradictions, confirming Kolnai's position:

> It is not that the utopian bliss cannot be satisfactorily put into practice: the trouble is that it cannot be thought out consistently in the theorist's study (Kolnai 1960/1999, p. 130).

3.3 The Panopticon of European quality assurance

In this final section we would like to return once again to the issue of social control that has already surfaced several times in this chapter. The Humboldtian research university itself can be seen as a mechanism of social control over formerly free-floating intellectual troublemakers. Also institutionalizing lifelong learning does not so much encourage individuals to learn

as it forces them to consume certified educational services. In this section a few additional words will be said regarding the emerging European higher education quality assurance process as a further means of social control and of fostering the agenda of a federal Europe.

The need to promote common European higher education quality assurance measures are manifold. First, establishing the European higher education brand-name without an adequate quality assurance mechanism would be impossible. There is simply no way of convincing the customer without some transparent procedure that the University of Tirana is comparable to Oslo or Oxbridge. Second, as no responsible national government could ever accept an inferior position in such comparisons, if for no other reason than at least for the sake of its own legitimacy, to allow the creation of a European brand the national governments' role in quality assurance should be neutralised as much as in *Tuning the education structures* discussed in the previous section. Both areas should be freed from the oversight of the Nation State. The third issue is that, as Neave (2004b) has recently discussed, different nations have developed different quality assurance mechanisms, some of them including elements of evaluation and others not, some to justify heavy handed administrative intervention while others have been set up with the precisely opposite aim of allowing steering from a distance. We should also add that as the group of signatory countries was extended in 2003, quality assurance procedures as institutionalised in some of the countries are no longer in a position to inspire a great deal of confidence in their function of assuring that the universities meet any minimum standards of quality. To put it another way, if a country's government and public services are known to be corrupt then there is no good reason to assume that its universities and related quality assurance measures are not, even if the Government claims not only to meet the highest international standards but actually be setting them. Fourth, declining per-capita funding in many European higher education systems has contributed to the need to employ quality assurance measures that increasingly look like the enforcement of minimum standards. Such quasi-policing measures allow cost-reduction in the face of possibly severe sanctions for a decline in *quality*. Finally, setting-up anything that is even mildly reminiscent of a supra-national accreditation agency offers a multi-million Euro business opportunity that many would be interested in seizing, and perceive as a good enough cause to lobby for. As Langan mentions in her paper:

> Bologna also calls for quality assurance of academic standards, which is primarily conducted by the European Association of Universities (EAU), an independent organisation not affiliated with any state accreditation agency (Langan 2004, p. 448).

This indicates that the European University Association that has been responsible for compiling the Trend reports, as well as conducting other activities related to the implementation of the Bologna Process, mainly funded by the European Commission is already perceived, at least in some quarters, mistakenly or otherwise, as an emerging supra-national European accreditation agency.

As has been argued elsewhere (Tomusk 2004b, 2004c), the need for quality assurance does not rise from an overwhelming perception of excellence in the universities. It arises when a significant segment of a society no longer trusts the university and the academics belonging to it. The need for external quality assurance indicates that on any account the community of scholars is no longer able to guarantee, by its own means, that its members abide by the mostly implicit rules of the game in what Habermas (1989) has called the "communication community". Obviously, certain members of the community have decided not to communicate what is true, but rather what is rational based on economic or political calculations. Society's response to this is a policing action — setting up an agency that makes sure that the taxpayers receive at least some truth, proportionate to that which the provision of tax monies allows. Such a line of argumentation suggests that quality assurance as it has become known in Europe over the past fifteen or so years does not so much offer a road to better quality higher education as it constitutes an imperfect solution to a grave problem of corrosion in academic culture. The solution, as some British colleagues suggest, is not entirely new since it was proffered by Jeremy Bentham who, having learned from his brother's experience in 19th century Russia, came up with an idea for a new type of social organisation, the Panopticon, initially designed as a prison. Although Michel Foucault has since argued that in contemporary society the Panopticon is very useful for many purposes, including that of educating the young. What follows is the description of the Panopticon offered by Foucault:

> In the Panopticon each person, depending on his place, is watched by all or certain of the others. You have an apparatus of total and circulating mistrust, because there is no absolute point (Foucault 1980).

In case any doubt that this applies to quality assurance in higher education should remain, one needs only look at how Geraint Johnes from Lancaster University thinks that the cost of quality assurance can be reduced in face of the increasing severity of the sanctions:

> … it is possible to design incentive structures which ensure honest self-evaluation. The thrust of the argument is that by heavily penalising any visited departments which are found to be cheating in self-assessment,

> honest revelation can be induced by reducing to below unity (indeed close to zero) the probability of a visit (Johnes 1997, p. 100).

Threatening departments with heavy penalties would turn, as Foucault has suggested, *each comrade* into an *overseer*, making sure that nobody provokes the wrath of the Quality Agency. How much any of that has to do with quality is an entirely different question. In our view sanctions may be helpful in eradicating a certain element of explicitly corrupt practice, but is not sufficient to restore the culture of academia. The latter relates to shared values among academics, which the shift from committed individuals to job-fillers has seriously eroded.

As is the case with the Bologna Process as such, the introduction of new political technologies under its auspices offers new employment opportunities for young and dynamic Europeans who do often not care much about the broader implications of their responsibilities:

> Like Bentham's prisoners, university staff become more or less unwitting accomplices in the setting-up of a wider system of imprisonment. In Foucauldian terms, this is a classic example of the moulding of subjectivity through the internalisation of externally-imposed norms (Shore and Roberts, 1995).

We already see growth in the numbers of new types of experts: 'educational development consultants', 'quality assurance officers', 'staff development trainers' and 'teaching quality assessors'… (Shore and Wright 1999) as a response to the European concern for the quality of its higher education. However, the army of European quality commissars, as Neave (2004b) seems to be suggesting, is by definition not even in the position to improve the educational process from which the Evaluative State has "resolutely withdrawn", but instead "replaces a circle of trust and confidence with a cycle of suspicion". Concluding his discussion of the Bologna Process as a part of the agenda of the Evaluative State Neave leaves the final outcome open:

> What remains to be seen is whether the Evaluative State will be able to resist the temptation to surround it with further reglementary controls operating not at supra-institutional level, but rather an inter-governmental level. In short, it remains to be seen whether the new vintage of the Evaluative State will be sufficiently robust to hold out against the temptation to 'cut' it with the old and feeble beverage of bureaucracy rampant (Neave 2004, p. 21).

As far as we can see, the writing is already on the wall: "*Mene, mene, tekel, parsin*" (Jer. 5: 25), and it is not only commissar Belshazzar in Brussels who is to be blamed.

4. CONCLUSION

Universities are profoundly ambivalent institutions. As Weiler (2005) argues, there is hardly anything universities are not ambivalent about: knowledge, society, democracy and so on, and so forth. Universities are also ambivalent about truth and intellectuals. Both are important in the justification of the university's existence before society, and both threaten the power and stability within, and also without. Gellner's explanation of the situation may be perceived as somewhat extreme:

> The reason why society must be based on falsehood is equally obvious. Truth is independent of the social order and is in no one's service, and if not impeded will end up by undermining respect for any authority structure. Only ideas pre-selected or pre-invented and then frozen by ritual and sanctification can be relied upon to sustain a specific organisational set-up. Free inquiry will undermine it (Gellner 1994, p. 31).

We have no doubt that free inquiry into the Bologna Process would undermine it, and this is the main reason why there is so much propaganda and so little intellectual rigor about it. Still, both society and its processes, Processes and *die Processen* (after all, Franz Kafka should not be ignored in the context of the contemporary European processes either), including the Bologna Process, need truth to legitimate them. They need the truth and the house of intellect because nobody else is left to serve as the fount of their legitimacy — no ultimate power, no universal church. University has to play that role. But then, because its presence is so very inconvenient, it is to be compromised by any means — sticks and carrots, grants and intimidation. All of that we have seen in this paper.

We have no doubt that the contemporary mass university already has been compromised on a massive scale. Intellect and truth are rare by definition, therefore *mass university* is itself a contradiction in terms. The Bologna Process, as we have shown, erodes European intellect still further. One can hardly imagine a more radical break from the idea of liberal education as expressed by Cardinal Newman, than that imposed upon European universities by the architects of the Process. Newman's words that have shaped the most successful part of European higher learning today sound nothing short of a shameful heresy in the context of the current attempts to rise its level of competitiveness:

> Knowledge is capable of being its own end. Such is the constitution of the human mind, that any knowledge, if it be really such is its own reward (Newman 1996, p. 78),

The consequences of that threaten to be particularly disastrous if the Spirit of Bologna succeeds in entering training at the doctoral level, as it is doing. That would represent nothing less than the replacement of training in free inquiry with the purchase of certificates of skills and competencies. On the other hand, an intellectual who is not able to resist the temptations and stand against the power of the Process does not deserve the title anyway. Intellectuals are as rare now as they have always been, but as they always have, they continue to exist. It is disappointing to see colleagues becoming propagandists, but here too, the twentieth century has shown us still worse examples. The strength of the Bologna Process is its main weakness — cognitive workers who compromise their intellect will eventually also compromise the Process. For a functionary, a profiled job-filler, filling the job is devoid of moral commitment. The hope we have for the future may well be charged with elitism to the extreme, although the available alternatives look inherently worse. Either the most exclusive parts of European higher education will succeed resisting the technocratic and politically imposed extremes of the Bologna utopia, or its remaining intellectuals should look for other hosts instead of corrupt credit-trading and *tuned* illiberal universities. In an extreme case, the society of knowledge that is worth of its name would once again need to hide itself from the eyes of the commissars and commissioners. Bologna Process has already created ample opportunities for the individuals who can never miss an opportunity to promote themselves. This, as Primo Levi suggests, is not unique even in the context of recent history:

> Do we not see individuals living without purpose, lacking all forms of self-control and conscience, who live not *in spite of* these defects, but … precisely because of them? (Levi 1987, p. 104).

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