Towards the Idea of a World University

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ABSTRACT: Could anyone reasonably oppose the idea that quality and excellence are essential to the university? However unlikely it seems, that is exactly what we would like to do in this article: we would like to reject the demand for quality and excellence in the university. We would like to arrive at a point at where the need for quality is no longer necessary. In this article, such a refusal will direct us to a proposal for using the spaces offered by the university and its teaching and research in a different way; in a way that transforms the university into a world university. This paper will argue that a world university is concentrated around attentive pools of worldly study. It is a university that has to invent new languages in order to answer the question "How can we live together?" In order to answer this question, and to be "present in the present," we will clarify our argument that both acceptance and attention are needed in the world university. This position implies a kind of curiosity that is not driven by the "will to know" but by a caring attitude to what is happening now.

KEYWORDS: University, critical analysis, ontology of the present, excellence, quality assurance, entrepreneurship, Foucault.

In a time where *quality* and *excellence* are high on the agenda of all of us, the old idea of the modern university (cf. von Humboldt, Newman), that is, an institution for free academic research and general education, seems to have lost all of its attraction. It is not an exaggeration to claim today that this old idea of the university is dead. Moreover, it seems that we – *we* being the "last academics" with a vague memory of what that modern university was about – have already finished the process of mourning and we have allied ourselves with the community of the entrepreneurial academic staff. For *us*, that is, for all of us today as scholars, lecturers, and students, it is almost impossible not to be concerned with excellence and quality and with consumer satisfaction and economic utility.

Meanwhile, these important changes within the university have been widely discussed, and from different angles, such as, for instance, the future of the (European) research university and mass higher

education (Scott, 1995; Barnett, 2000; Neave, 2006), the implosion of the university's public role and the future of liberal education (Axelrodt, 2002; Calhoun, 2006; Marginson, 2006), and the capitalisation and corporatisation of higher education (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Giroux, 2003). Although we will draw upon some of these studies, the approach of this paper is slightly different. The first aim of the paper is to make a kind of confession: although this community of academic entrepreneurs offers us many professional opportunities, there is something in ourselves that feels ill at ease at being part of it; the future of such a community can not be reduced to ours; and its ethos of work appears less and less acceptable. In view of this unease, the paper has a double scope. It wants to refuse who we are asked to be today (i.e., academics that are obsessed with quality and excellence), and to introduce another idea of the university. In order to address these issues, this paper will firstly describe the *we* who resides in the entrepreneurial university.

Who Could Possibly Be Against Excellence and Quality?

The former Director General of UNESCO Federico Mayor claimed some time ago that "it is impossible to guarantee the quality of education without having the aim of excellence resting on the domains of research, teaching, preparation and learning" and that "the search for excellence reaffirms its pertinence and closely links to quality" (Mayor as cited in Readings, 1996, p. 31). Meanwhile, the search for excellence and quality assurance is part of the daily experience of policy makers as well as academic staff all over the world. The European Union, supported by the European University Association (EUA), promotes for instance the creation of networks of excellence in the European research area, and universities for instance aim at shaping pools of excellent research and quality education (e.g., European Commission, 2003; European University Association – EUA, 2005). In a context like this, a context where *quality assurance* and the *search for excellence* are regarded as common practices, it is unlikely that we hear the questions "Who could be opposed to excellence?" or "Who could be against quality?" as anything other than rhetorical questions. For us these questions no longer seem like real questions; according to us nobody could reasonably oppose quality (assurance).

Yet, the situation that one cannot reasonably oppose quality and excellence is precisely what this paper wants to investigate. Moreover, the aim is to arrive at a point where we can refuse the need for quality and excellence; where the need for excellence and quality becomes no longer inevitable. The question "Who could be opposed to quality and

excellence?" henceforth should be regarded as a real question arising from our refusal of the concern for quality and excellence. Based on this refusal, the paper proposes to use the spaces offered by the university and its scene of teaching and research in a different way, that is, in a way that transforms the university into a world university.

In order to arrive at that point of refusal and transformation we will first describe how our current focus on quality and excellence emerged with the decline of the nation state (see Readings, 1996). We will describe the shift from "we, citizens of the nation state and concerned with our culture" towards "we, citizens of the knowledge society and concerned with our human capital." In this description of "who are we today?" it is not our aim to start identifying the (economic) interest groups or power groups behind the mechanisms of quality and excellence. Instead, and drawing loosely upon Foucault's "ontology of the present" (Foucault, 1982, pp. 231-232; 1983, p. 448; 1984a, p. 573; cf. Gros, 2002), we regard quality and excellence as a "singular, historical experience" and focus on the historical conditions that gave rise to this experience (Foucault, 1984b, p. 13). In short, the aim is to describe the kind of subject or human figure that experiences striving for excellence and quality as meaningful, and we are supposing that in another historical context, and for another kind of subject, excellence and quality are meaningless.

We, Citizens of a Nation State and Our National Culture

First, it is important to keep in mind that the need for excellence and for quality, and the decline of the modern university, has taken shape at the time of the decline of the nation state, or at least the redefinition of its role in the second part of the 20th century (Neave, 2006). When speaking of the modern, research university, reference is made to the German model, which von Humboldt instituted at the University of Berlin, that was widely copied (as well as modified) all over the world and which still served as a leading model for the post-war expansion of tertiary education in the west (cf. von Humboldt, 1810/1959; Ash, 1999).

The modern university should be described as an institution with the nation state and national culture as its main reference (cf. Readings, 1996; Pritchard, 2004). This is to say that this institution was needed by subjects who defined themselves primarily as citizens of a national state, and being citizen of a state meant to be educated in its culture and to speak its language. What is at stake in this university is the study of culture and language. Culture here is the sum of knowledge that is studied (in research), as well as the cultivation and development of one's character as a result of that study (in teaching and learning).

Hence, the German *research* university is at the same time an institution for *Bildung* or general edification. Its definition was in essence a cultural and non-utilitarian one (Henningsen, 2006). Therefore, the modern university (at least in the German tradition) did not aim to train the administrators (functionaries) of the state, but to educate the (enlightened) citizens or subjects of the state. In view of this, the question "Who needs the modern university?" could be answered: it is the citizen of a nation state, being a state that is unified (or that should become increasingly unified) through its culture and language, that is in need of the modern university.

As we all know by now, the university no longer has to propagate and safeguard national culture. To put this in another way: the nation state is no longer the major site at which (cultural) capital reproduces itself. Hence, the idea of national culture no longer functions as an external referent or "grand narrative" toward which all of the efforts of research and teaching are directed (Lyotard, 1979). The idea of national culture no longer provides an overarching ideological horizon for what goes on in the university. And as a result of this, what exactly is investigated and taught as knowledge matters less than the fact that it be excellently taught or investigated. Excellence here has no content for it applies to everything. It functions according to what Lyotard has called "performativity," that is, the (technological) focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of operations (Lyotard, 1979; Ball, 2003). However, although excellence has no content, it does not imply that the search for excellence does not ask for a specific attitude of universities or staff. Hence, we will describe in more detail the kind of subject or figure that experiences excellence as meaningful in the next section.

Before sketching the new figure (or citizen) that needs excellence (and no longer needs "being educated in a national culture") we have to point to a very important tension that was present in that modern university. Although the main reference was the nation state and the national culture, it is important to stress that there have always been attempts to take not so much the citizen as a point of reference but humanity or, in the terms of Kant, the world-citizen or cosmopolite. This attempt to reach beyond the (geographical and cultural) limits of the nation state is clearly expressed in the idea of general education ("allgemeine Bildung") where it is argued that the focus in education should be equally on both citizenship and "man" (or "mankind") in general – that is, "man should not be sacrificed to citizenship" (cf. von Humboldt as cited in Krautkrämer, 1979, p. 33). However, this tension between "citizen" and "man," and the reference to humanity and being human ("there is more than civic society and being a citizen") arises

exactly at the moment that the national state and its sovereignty are taken as the starting point (and because of this). We will take up this tension again later, since it comes back today in a relevant way – for example with regard to our "treatment" of illegal immigrants and refugees. First, let us focus on the question "What kind of subject needs excellence and quality?"

We, Citizens of a Knowledge Society and Our Human Capital

Instead of referring to (national) culture, universities today rely on concepts such as quality and excellence in order to position themselves. They want to offer quality education, and they want to be excellent in what they do. Hence, the question is: for whom is this university of excellence important or necessary, who needs this kind of university, and who is willing or wanting quality? Our answer to this question: it is the *entrepreneurial* self, submitting itself to the "economic tribunal," that is, to the tribunal of linking supply and demand, who experiences quality and excellence as a permanent concern (cf. Bensimon, 1995; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Du Guy & Salaman, 1992; Peters, 2000). The entrepreneurial self is a figure that is "demand-driven" (both by his or her own demands and by the demands of his or her environment). In order to make this answer plausible, some features of this entrepreneurial figure and some manifestations of his or her "will to quality" will be sketched in the European context.[1]

    We are told today (and for a lot of European countries this is a new development) that students do not simply *go* to a university or *attend* classes. They *choose* a university and this choice is a *calculated choice* in which they take into account their needs and especially their need to acquire competencies or *human capital* that will bring them some return afterwards. So they are told to regard their choice as an investment, which of course implies that they have a portfolio (a wallet) in which they keep records of the human capital that they have acquired (Dochy & Moerkerke, 1977, pp. 110-111). Students thus look at themselves as having human and social capital (e.g., networks) they can use, and that should be up-to-date in order to stay employable. These kinds of entrepreneurial students, who regard education as an investment in human capital, prefer education that is competency-based (in order to have a clear image about the usefulness of what they learn) and that offers flexible learning trajectories and clear-cut modules (in order to be able to make quick adjustments in one's investment). Such a flexible infrastructure of (higher) education – meanwhile being organized on a European scale – is what the entrepreneurial student

needs, for it guarantees her or his investment in the competencies (or human capital) she or he expects will give access to a labour environment – all over Europe (Bologna Declaration, 1999; European Commission, 2003).

In this infrastructure, the entrepreneurial student is in need of a learning contract, that is, a formal agreement that includes for instance a precise and transparent formulation of the conditions under which the *teaching service* is delivered and what customers can expect to be the competencies or human capital that will be produced (see Elen, 1988). The social relations between teachers and students are thus seen as exchange or service relations and are based on agreements or contracts in which mutual expectations and responsibilities are defined. It implies that the entrepreneurial student (and teacher) is always calculating and counting what is important and what not. The entrepreneurial student is a calculating self; it monitors itself (e.g., the amount of human capital in one's portfolio), it keeps its own account and is accountable.

The entrepreneurial student who considers education as an investment looks for quality. Quality in this context refers to the fact that the service that is supplied by the university has some kind of added value for the student (Demeulemeester & Callewier, 1997, p. 33). It means that the delivered service takes student needs into account and wants to bring about a fit between the demand and the supply (cf. Kaufman, 1995, p. 6; cf. Bradley, 1993, p. 65). In an ideal situation, the student that is looking for the best investment wants to know which service best takes his or her needs into account. In view of this, entrepreneurial students want the quality or *added value* of the university be clearly demonstrated to them. Hence, governmental agencies or bureaus in most European countries start to see it as their task to make the teaching or research quality visible in order to enable students to make good choices and in order to bring about a kind of "public accountability" (cf. Ranson, 2003). Also at the institutional and departmental level, collecting and spreading information on quality (of lecturers, researchers, research centres and the like) has become a permanent concern.

The strategy here is to make sure that the supplier always and everywhere takes into account the needs of the individual student (cf. Onnias, 1993, pp. 169-171). Quality assurance moreover is something that the student himself or herself (and for him or herself) is involved in. For the entrepreneurial student, the quality of one's own life and needs are the criteria for making decisions about one's investments and choices. In short, the student today is clearly an entrepreneur of the self, that is, someone who invests in oneself and who manages a

personal learning process as a business in order to capitalize his or her life (Rose, 1999). To be a good student today means to be entrepreneurial and to be entrepreneurial implies being concerned with quality.

This does not apply only to students. Researchers and lecturers at the university have to act and think in the same, entrepreneurial way. In order to survive, to get along, or to hold a position it is necessary for them to know one's human capital, to use and develop one's competencies, to develop strategic goals based on one's reading of the competitive environment and to evaluate and manage one's life in view of these strategic goals. The entrepreneurial academic is sensitive to quality, both in what that person supplies and what is needed or demanded (cf. Morgan & Murgatroyed, 1994, pp. 101-102) and looks constantly for improvement on the basis of permanent evaluation. The entrepreneurial academic is a subject who is highly responsive to the changing environment, that is, an environment with changing needs, and who, except for quality assurance, experiences flexibility, pro-activity, and responsiveness as basic virtues.

In this world of entrepreneurial students and academics, universities also start to describe themselves as enterprises or corporations and try to transform themselves accordingly (see Clark, 1998). The university today must recognize that its research and education must suit its customers, and that it must occupy a position similar to that of the entrepreneurial teacher who is obsessed with one's customers. These entrepreneurial universities have to consider everything they do from the viewpoint of the assurance of quality. This means that they have to take into account at all levels the needs of their internal environment (e.g., students) and their external environment (e.g., local community). The entrepreneurial university should thus regard itself as an enterprise that supplies education and research as a service and should acknowledge it has many "stakeholders" (Halal, 1986, p. 103). For this university there is no such thing as "good education" in the sense of a fixed-end state. Over and over again, the university has to ask itself: what are the needs of the students? What promotes quality or adds value? Furthermore, the entrepreneurial university that respects itself and its clients is not just obsessed with quality, but must also welcome permanent (external) evaluation and accreditation (Accreditation of Higher Education, 2001). The information on quality and accreditation is needed by the university not only to reflect on its own position (in relation to other institutions) but primarily to help customers and investors in their choice.

In this context of entrepreneurial students, academics, and institutions, government has come to see its task as creating the conditions for entrepreneurship and choice. What is at stake here is the establishment and protection of an environment in which schools, teachers, students, parents, and so on, can behave in an entrepreneurial way. This strategy of "marketisation" is part of what Rose identified as "advanced liberal" government (1996). National governments see their task as creating opportunities for universities to become excellent in teaching and research, collecting and offering for instance information on the quality of education, and organizing forms of *market accountability* in order to promote optimal choice and competition (cf. Vidovich & Slee, 2001). On a transnational scale, the creation of the European area of higher education can equally be regarded as a governmental attempt to shape such an entrepreneurial infrastructure (Bologna Declaration, 1999; cf. Masschelein & Simons, 2002). Advanced liberal government, thus, does not assume that markets are a natural condition, but holds to the idea that markets have to be created by governmental intervention, and that specific agencies are needed to make these markets operational. The following quote from the report of the "Dutch Commission for the Accreditation of Higher Education" summarizes very well this logic of entrepreneurship, quality, and customer service:

> You and I certainly keep ourselves well informed about the quality of products and services we are likely to buy. A person, when choosing a certain kind of learning, wants to compare what the different providers of education offer; he or she wants to compare the quality. The battle for students is more and more centered on the quality of education, the specific attractiveness of the provider for the student. Therefore, the quality offered should be made more visible and transparent. We should arrive at a Europe-wide transparency. In this context accreditation is an important tool to increase the autonomy not only of the students but also of the schools, since autonomy is not possible without responsibility towards society. Society has the right to control how providers operate and with what results. (Accreditation of Higher Education, 2001, p. 1, author translation).

The previous quote highlights very well the argument that quality arises as a permanent concern in education or research when we start looking at education or research as a service that is provided to customers (e.g., students, private companies, or society as such) or when we start addressing the problem in terms of linking supply and demand. This kind of linking describes precisely the university's relation to the customer or the submission to, what we might call in Michel Foucault's

phrase, the "permanent economic tribunal" (Foucault, 2004, p. 253). Submitting ourselves to this tribunal implies that we judge everything according to the needs and demands of the environment, and that we thus judge ourselves (and others) according to the laws of entrepreneurship and competition. It is this tribunal that demands both responsiveness to those needs and a permanent obsession with quality. Hence, the economic tribunal to which universities (as well as students and academics) submit themselves permanently in their entrepreneurship is at the same time a kind of "permanent quality tribunal" (cf. Simons, 2002). One symptom of this submission is the constant asking of the question: what is quality (in this environment, in the view of these clients)?

It is important to stress at this point that the demand for quality can have a private dimension (the specific needs of clients for instance) as well as a public dimension (the needs of society). In view of this, policy makers and scholars all over the world stress the necessity for universities and their staff to start looking at teaching and research as a service, to become responsive, and to develop a capacity to change in order to be able to face ever changing needs (cf. Tierney, 1998; Duderstadt, 2000). Their proposals are an ongoing justification of the permanent economic/quality tribunal. In conclusion, and in order to grasp the precise impact of this tribunal, we have to look again at the concept of excellence.

For the entrepreneurial university, being under submission to the (economic) quality tribunal implies that the university is always in a position of competition and is always trying to maintain its market position. In addition, the identification of enterprising qualities in the university is only possible in reference to other enterprising individuals and/or institutions and not, for instance, in reference to a stable (institutional/professional) norm (see Bröckling, Krasmann, & Lemke, 2004). Of course, systems of quality assurance or quality control (for example, those organized by a governmental agency) do use some stable (although relative) quality indicators, but the precise meaning of a score on a quality indicator is dependent on the scores of other institutions or of other academics. In this context of quality assurance and quality control, excellence has a very precise meaning: excellence is about performing better than others given a particular set of quality indicators. From this perspective, that is, in the world of the entrepreneurial university and the entrepreneurial academic, excellence is not at all an empty, neutral notion.

In sum, quality and excellence seem to be the main (and only) indicators of good research and good teaching today. However, it is

important to emphasize that this search for excellence or the *will to quality* are contingent and historical – this search or will is not the same as, for instance, the old striving for "good education" and "good research." The only meaningful experiences today are those that are entrepreneurial – we are expected to judge everything we do in terms of customer service, excellence, and quality. Today, the desired behavior is that *we* conduct ourselves as entrepreneurial students and entrepreneurial academics, aiming for excellence and quality in education and research.

We, Our Exposition as Strangers in the World

From the viewpoint of entrepreneurship, striving for excellence and quality is self-evident. Hence, from this entrepreneurial point of view, the question "Who is against quality or excellence?" is not at all a serious question and belongs to the sphere of rhetoric. However, we would like to ask: "What kind of person would question the university that promotes excellence?" "For what kind of subject would this question not be a rhetorical one?" The person who wants to ask these questions seriously clearly does not regard herself as a supplier of a service or as a customer. It is someone who does not understand herself to be part of a nation-state, a particular culture, or a market environment. According to us, it is someone who wants to think, who wants to study what is happening to us today, and who wants to expose herself to the world. While the cultural or entrepreneurial person is looking for a *position* in a nation or market, the member of the world university we have in mind aims at *ex-positioning*: putting a position under scrutiny, putting it under examination, thinking about it. One could say that the thinking person or student is the one who refuses to submit herself to a (cultural or economic) tribunal. The acts of thinking and studying we want to describe here are not at all productive acts and are not related to an entrepreneurial attitude. They have no added value. What we have in mind is a willingness to live at the edge of known experience, a "limit-attitude" that implies working on the self (for example by reading, walking, etc.) in order "to think something other and different from that which we previously thought" (Foucault, 1984b, p. 14). Working on the self is about investigating and exploring the limits of our thinking (and of our institutions), that is, the limits of our selves and of whom we are today.

Thus, in this section of the article we will develop our idea of a *world university* based on the idea that someone who is studying and thinking is a person that exposes herself to *the world*. With the formulation of this idea we do not attempt however to save what has

been lost in relation to either a particular idea of the Humanities or to liberal education (cf. Nussbaum, 1997; Shills, 1997; Engell & Dangerfield, 1998). Instead, we want to take Readings' idea of the "university in ruins" seriously, and we hope to take it a step further by formulating a positive idea of what study and research in tomorrow's universities could be like (1996). We will introduce and shortly describe in particular the following dimensions of what we call the world university: the attitude of acceptance and attention towards the world, the idea of study and "e-ducation" and finally the practice of truth-telling.

The World, Acceptance and Attention

The notion *world* as we use it here has no geographical meaning. It is not a place defined by borders and it is not space ordered by a tribunal, by gatekeepers, and by laws (for example, by laws of reason, economic exchange, justice, or humanity). Precisely for that reason, nobody is in a position to speak in the name of a kind of world order or world tribunal. While the nation state and the global market environment are places with some kinds of gatekeepers, the notion world refers precisely to a time and place without gatekeepers. Or to put this otherwise: with the notion world university we do not want to refer to a university that acts as a gatekeeper of the world. Such a gate-keeping university would be a university that knows what the world is about, what is needed (e.g., reason, culture, competencies, entrepreneurial qualities), and whose academics judge the future inhabitants, that is, students that want to pass through the gate.

The world, instead, is what shows itself in the question about our living together.[2] Being exposed to the world is being exposed to the question about how to live together, to the question of being-together. However, this is not a technical, governmental question about levels of inclusion or exclusion and it is not a humanitarian or juridical question about (the lack of) support or individual rights (cf. Rancière, 1998). For sure, these governmental, humanitarian, and juridical questions do exist and are relevant. Nevertheless, a common feature of these questions, and what distinguishes them from the worldly questions we have in mind, is that they are asked from a specific position (even if the question is exactly about obtaining a position in society), addressed towards people within a specific position (e.g., politicians, state officials, jurists) and appearing within prefixed discourses and procedures of problem solving. Instead, worldly questions put our living together as such under examination. They could be named *political* questions. Yet

taking into account that we use here a very particular concept of the word political, this needs some clarification.

Juridical, moral, governmental, pedagogical, humanitarian questions are strictly speaking *problems* (of rights, values and norms, representation, skills, basic needs) within a particular regime of living (together). However, in our view, political questions are those questions asked by people not part of a regime of living, that is, questions asked by those groups who are not perceived as having a position at all. It could be for instance a question emerging from the mere presence of illegal immigrants, or the presence of demonstrators walking in the street, or the public appearance of fully covered Muslim women in some countries. What these political questions ask goes far beyond merely holding a position within a particular regime. They are not simply motivated by a willingness of people to hold a position (e.g., of entitlement to basic rights, respect for values, adequate representation, useful skills, and the fulfillment of basic needs). What is shown and demonstrated by the people asking political questions is first of all that they assume an equality, that is an "axiomatic assumption of equality" (cf. Rancière, 1998). The very act of asking these questions is first of all an act of claiming one's equality in front of others. Thus, faced with these questions on "How are we to live together?" we are first of all confronted with the necessity for us all to accept our radical equality as political subjects.

This demonstration of equality and the confrontation with the radical question of "How to live together?" is uncomfortable. Moreover, because *we* have comfortable (juridical, governmental, pedagogical) regimes and (professional) positions to manage people who have problems, we do not often hear questions on living together. In our position as entrepreneurial lecturers and researchers we do not hear or discuss questions about equality and living together since we presuppose that living together is about gaining skills and being entrepreneurial within a competitive environment. As self-professed humanitarian workers we act as if we know that living together is all about the provision of basic needs and health. In short, we stick to our position, we hold to our professional gaze and we do not question our common practices. But what if, to use an uncomfortable image of Finkelkraut, we are so busy filling hungry mouths with rice we cannot hear what the mouths are saying? (1996, p. 128). Or to use an educational example: what if we are so busy including disabled pupils and students in our educational system by taking into account their individual needs we cannot hear what they say about equality and living together? What if their "need" is not to be addressed as people with

needs? It should be clear by now why we want to argue that holding to a position, sticking to the laws of some kind of tribunal and resisting all kinds of ex-position prevents us from hearing worldly questions. In sum, the obsession today with quality and excellence at the university, and its related entrepreneurial attitude is immunizing us and preventing us from listening to what the world has to say to us (cf. Esposito, 2000).

In view of this idea on the world and politics, we want to introduce the notion of the world university which refers to a university that exposes itself to the question of how we are to live together. Unlike the cultural or entrepreneurial university, the world university does not submit the world to a tribunal and does not judge the world according to its laws. Its mission instead is to explore and investigate what can be changed in one's own thinking by exposing it to today's worldly questions. This means that the world university is always operating at the borders, that is, the present limits or the limits of *us* today. Being able to listen to these questions about living together, to hear them, and thus be exposed to them requires a very specific academic attitude. What is needed is not an attitude of investment maximization or of entrepreneurship, but an uncomfortable attitude of acceptance and attention. Without such an attitude of acceptance, it is impossible to listen and to be attentive to what is going on. Of course this acceptance and attention of the members of the world university is uncomfortable because it implies a giving up of all positions, a giving up of gate-keeping activities and tribunals. But this acceptance and attention is required in order to be *present in the present* and to be able to read what is happening today. It implies a kind of curiosity that is not driven by the willingness to merely accumulate knowledge, but by an attitude of caring – the word *care* is part of the word curiosity – to what is happening today and to our current conditions of living together (Foucault, 1984b, p.14).[3] In sum, being part of a world university is about being in the world, being exposed, being out of position, or being captured by questions of living together.

Study and E-ducational Moments

In order to describe in more detail what could be happening in a world university, we want to reaffirm the importance of studying, or at least a particular idea of studying and being a student (Agamben, 1998, pp. 44-47). As we mentioned in the previous section, studying can be regarded as a practice that is driven by a curiosity for the world, which helps the student develop an attitude of attention and acceptance. The practice of studying looked at from this perspective is, to use a paradoxical formulation, an activity to become passive, and hence to

become attentive. According to us, very common and simple practices such as reading, writing, listening, learning by heart, and (mental or physical) exercises could have these effects. From the viewpoint of the entrepreneurial student and lecturer most of these practices are meaningless or produce no added value. It is our contention however that practices such as these can function as "techniques of the self" in order to "work on the self" (cf. Foucault, 1984b). Studying looked at from this perspective is what allows the student and the teacher to enter an attentive condition; a condition in which something can happen to them, and in which they can be exposed to the world. In a very specific sense, these practices of study could be described as preparatory exercises or exercises "to bring oneself into a condition" of passivity. These are the – often neglected or ridiculed – practices in which we work upon ourselves and upon our limits.

The practice of reading can serve as an illustration. Reading and re-reading a text over and over again can bring the student into a passive, attentive condition. It is a condition in which words can say something to the student and can ask something. Through reading and re-reading a text, the student can lose oneself, and this is a condition in which one enters the world and is exposed. It is important to stress again that practices such as reading ask for a kind of self-discipline. The student for instance has to force herself or himself to keep on reading. But this kind of self-discipline has nothing to do with the kind of discipline that is required to submit oneself to a tribunal or to norms. It is a positive, and even positivistic, self-discipline; it is about the "techniques of the self" that make something possible, that allow something to happen, that enables the student to become exposed and that makes it possible for the world to speak to the student. Because these techniques transform a person to attentiveness to the world, they can be described as *pedagogical* techniques. Furthermore, because the very aim of these worldly pedagogical techniques is to make people attentive without their holding on to the world and accepting what the world is telling, these techniques function in specific way as "pure means" (cf. Agamben, 1995). What is at stake is the idea of a pedagogy of "pure" means, of means without an end, or of worldly means.[4]

It is important to stress again that the world university as a university of study is not an institution that is closing itself off from the world and from what is happening today. Instead, involvement in the practice of studying the university is in itself attentiveness to what is happening; it is being present in the present and exposed to the world. The entrepreneurial university is the institution that lacks curiosity and attention in its obsession with excellence. In contrast, the world

university makes use of the available space and time of the university in order to turn it into a place of worldly study. Its aim is not the production of knowledge or the acquisition of competencies, but the offering of opportunities to become attentive to what is going on today. What is at stake here is the time of the *scholè* or *free time*. However, the time of the world university (and its study) as free time is not to be understood as time to relax or as a time of entertainment and leisure. Instead, it is a difficult and uncomfortable time where one is freed from oneself and other concerns and where one is faced with the burden of the question of being-together. This is a burden because it presents itself to us as an open question and not as a neatly formulated problem for which we have effective and efficient solutions. At the world university, through the attitudes of attention and acceptance, the world appears as a question of being-together. Again, the world university and its practices of study do not regard the world as a (pre-existing) object of knowledge. The world co-exists with the university, and of course with all other places where people are attentive and expose themselves to open questions of being-together.

A world university, that is, a space and time for the practice of study, can be created within any moment. It demands no heroic actions, and no radical transformation of our institutions. The world can show itself for instance in a classroom, at the scene of teaching and studying. The force of transgression in teaching and studying, and the opportunities for students to enter the world, resides not so much in the content of teaching, than in the way teaching and studying resists and holds open the temporality of questioning (cf. Readings, 1996). At this point, we want to introduce the concept *e-ducation*, which stresses the idea of being led out (derived from the Latin *e-ducere*). E-ducation here has nothing to do with (the formal infrastructure for) learning and development or with preparing pupils to enter the (knowledge) society with sufficient competencies. E-ducation instead refers to the moment at which one is out of position or exposed. And pedagogical practices of study prepare these e-ducational moments, that is, moments of leading out, or leading into the world. Since these moments of e-ducation can only be prepared in pedagogical practices and cannot be foreseen, e-ducation can strictly speaking not be an object of investment.

The lecturer at the world university is foremost a researcher, or more precisely, she or he is someone who studies and listens to the world, and who invites others to do the same. The lecturer can help or support the student in preparing oneself to become attentive, and can offer various pedagogical practices. However, it should be evident by now that in this context the distinction between teaching and studying

becomes obsolete. At e-ducational moments where the teacher and student are exposed to the world they are also exposed to each other. In other words, when confronted with the question of "How can we live together?" they are both out of position. At this moment of exposure or e-ducation the students/lecturers do not share the same language, but they can start sharing ideas, due to their shared attention and curiosity for the present. Through study, both become students of the present world, that is, listeners of what the world has to say to them and curious researchers that are waiting for new ideas to come. Both the teacher and the student are out of position or exposed at these moments, they both lose their identity and they are confronted with the question of being together. In the next section, we will try to describe more precisely that this question leads to a particular kind of truth-telling.

Speaking the Truth and Non-addressed Speech

Students at the world university acknowledge that they owe something to the world and more specifically to those who put forward the question of how we are to live together. They feel responsible, which is not the same as feeling accountable. It is crucial to make a distinction between accountability and responsibility (see Readings, 1996, Derrida, 2001). Accountability immediately puts someone in a market position (for instance an economic relationship of exchange) or in a hierarchical position (for instance of authority based on expertise or function). Accountability, both in the sense of giving an account and holding someone accountable, involves a submission to the procedures, positions, and rules and the ability to express what one owes to each other. Responsibility instead implies a *question*. The question of "How to live together" does not ask for an account, but asks the world university to give an *answer*.

However, there is not a defined addressee for this answer because who asks the question is not the main issue. It is not the questioner's own interest or *stake* that is at stake. Instead, questions being asked about how to live together concern all of us and hence no one in particular. In other words, the world is precisely something that does not presuppose a *we*, or a shared interest or identity of its inhabitants that can be addressed, but nevertheless asks for an answer (see Walser, 2000). The world is kind of no-man's-land or sphere without borders or positions, without a fixed register of problem solving techniques and it is a place where we are on our own. Feeling responsible for the question "How to live together?" means entering this no-man's-land and starting to look for answers.

In fact, what this question "How are we to live together?" wants from the world university is the classic obligation to tell the truth. At this point, the world university re-inscribes itself in a longstanding tradition where telling the truth is a duty or a responsibility rather than only an epistemological issue or matter of method. It is the tradition of *parrhesia* or *free speech*, that is, speaking openly and frankly (Foucault, 2001, p. 388; cf. 1989b; cf. Peters, 2003). The world university feels obliged to speak the truth openly and frankly, of course without knowing in advance who needs this truth. It is an obligation for radical free speech to be addressed to *nobody*, that is, to nobody in particular, or more precisely, to everybody who inhabits no-man's-land.

Thus, speaking at the world university means that we need to take seriously the idea that nobody in particular is being addressed in the world. The world asks to speak the truth without addressing someone. We can reformulate this point as follows: questions about "How are we to live together?" require from the world university ideas, words, and gestures. Thus at the uncomfortable e-ducational moments generated at the world university, we are out of position but nevertheless called upon to speak the truth. Being out of position means that it is no longer possible to speak this truth in the name of some order or principles outside ourselves, such as universal reason or the economic tribunal. Being confronted with worldly questions and feeling responsible implies that we can speak and answer only in our own name. Speaking in one's own name however is in fact speaking without name for it is not speaking either from a particular position, nor from a universal position; it is the speech of a person who is out of position.

Being out of position and having no interests except for feeling obliged to answer the question of how to live together, should result in truth telling that is somehow universal. Again, the issue of universality should not be located at the epistemological or methodological level of validity. Neither does universal in this context means that everyone can understand what the world university says. The universality of truth telling at the world university is derived from the fact that it answers a worldly question; it answers a question that is asked by those who demonstrate their equality in front of others. Truth telling without addressing someone in particular is only possible if we are out of position or exposed.

Conclusion

This paper has a double scope. Its aim is to refuse who we are asked to be today (i.e., academics who are obsessed with quality and excellence), and to introduce another idea of the university. By formulating this

alternative idea, or at least some main characteristics, we hope to have explained that for *us* (for us today as scholars, lecturers, and students) it is possible not to be concerned with excellence and quality and with consumer satisfaction and economic utility. Although the idea of the world-university is formulated at a rather abstract level and needs some elaboration, we do think it makes sense, and it does not ask for heroic interventions or radical transformation. Therefore, we conclude on a more practical note.

The world university gradually transforms the pools of excellent research and pools of excellent competency-based education (that are essential to the university of excellence) into attentive pools of worldly study. This means that the university opens up a space to invent new languages, that is, languages required to give a voice to the inhabitants of the world. The inhabitants of the world who demonstrate the issues of living together as equals today are in the first place the refugees and illegal immigrants, or the homeless. Feeling responsible for their questions, and listening to these questions as questions that concern all of us, the attentive pools of worldly study have to investigate for instance the relationship between (world) democracy and state-based citizenship. If citizenship is required to take part in democracy, then democracy as *the power of the people* would exclude exactly those people who we in another sense could consider as the *demos* of the democracy: the have-nots, illegal immigrants, refugees, and so on (cf. Rancière, 1998; Agamben, 1995). It is those who are excluded in the very act of defining and establishing citizenship who cannot be represented in the usual categories of work, civil society, or conventional politics. What has to be made clear is that these categories of people (because they are categories) only exist because nation states and national citizenship constitute the starting point. And when (and as far as) world universities take up these problems as questions, they have as a reference not the national state, the learning society, or the market, but the world – the space that belongs to everyone and no-one.

Who are we to believe in the world university? Let us be honest and straightforward at this point: we think it either implies a (modern) cynical attitude or a fundamentalist (religious, entrepreneurial) attitude to be against the world.

NOTES

1. For a more detailed analysis of this figure: Masschelein & Simons, 2002, 2003. Foucault first focused on this figure of "entrepreneurship" and the "entrepreneurial self" in his analysis of neoliberalism at the level of governmentality: Foucault, 2004, p. 232; Gordon, 1991, p. 44. Meanwhile,

this idea has been developed further: Du Gay & Salaman, 1992; Rose, 1996, Dean, 1999, Bröckling, 2002. For educational studies discussing these ideas see for example: Peters, 2000; Ball, 2003.

2. This elaboration of the notion "world" and "the political" is inspired by: Nancy, 1996, 2002; Rancière, 1998; cf. Masschelein & Simons, 2002.

3. See also the dream of Foucault: "I dream of the intellectual destroyer of evidence and universalities, the one who, in the inertias and constraints of the present, locates and marks the weak points, the openings, the lines of power, who incessantly displaces himself, doesn't know exactly where he is heading nor what he'll think tomorrow because he is too attentive to the present (Foucault 1984/1989a, p. 155).

4. For an interesting and inspiring elaboration of the idea of "means without ends" (at a political level): Agamben, 1995.

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