

excellent

The road to ruin

**Dutch universities,
past, present and
future**

Rudolf Dekker



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1. Introduction

Few countries have more universities per square meter than the Netherlands, with its fifteen universities and more than fifty universities of applied sciences in a relatively small country. About half of the Dutch people should receive some form of higher education at a Bachelor or higher level, at least according to the goal set by the Dutch government. This is a recent development in the history of Dutch universities which stretches back more than four centuries. The first was Leiden which was established in 1575, and then in the seventeenth century universities were founded in several other towns. In 1876 a new act on higher education was introduced which gave the universities of Leiden, Utrecht, Groningen and Amsterdam an equal status. In later years the Calvinist Vrije Universiteit (now the VU-University) was founded in Amsterdam as well as the Catholic University in Nijmegen (now the Radboud University). New faculties and chairs were introduced over time, but in general the landscape of higher education in the Netherlands had changed little until fifty years ago.

The academic world was a relatively quiet niche in Dutch society, with the press only paying attention in the case of a centenary celebration or when a Dutch professor received the Nobel Prize. Today, universities constantly make headlines on the front pages of Dutch newspapers. Most often it concerns bad news like fraudulent research practices, substandard teaching, distressing working conditions, overpaid administrators, underpaid teachers and failing management. Over the last few years a torrent of articles, letters, Internet publications and weblogs have pointed out these and many more

problems and abuses. Sometimes scandals were revealed by whistle-blowers who wisely stayed anonymous for fear of repercussions. So far, all the attention has been split into separate issues and it is high time to look for a pattern in all that has been written about what is going wrong. What is the link between the rising pressure to publish, swindling professors and the introduction of flexible contracts for teachers and researchers? Administrators and managers simply ignore the facts, instead they boast of the 'excellence' of their institutions: excellent governance, excellent teaching and excellent research. Students are lured into their institutions by the newly created 'excellentie trajecten', special courses for the above average talented and wealthy students. Many teachers and researchers, however, are afraid that the road to excellence they are selling is in effect a road to ruin.

Friend and foe agree on one point: this is a time of great change. The Dutch government and the governing boards of the universities have tried to transform higher education into a moneymaking business in recent years but these drastic changes also have a longer history. What is happening today is the third wave of university reform within fifty years. The two previous episodes should be included in an analysis. The first radical change took place in 1971 when a new Higher Education Act was introduced: the *Wet Universitaire Bestuurshervorming* (WUB). This act was partly the result of several years of student protests in the Netherlands, similar to student actions in other countries especially those in Paris in 1968. In Amsterdam students had occupied the *Maagdenhuis*, the monumental residence of the board of the University of Amsterdam and the new act of 1971 included some of the wishes of the students.

The WUB gave universities a more democratic structure, in which teachers and students had a vote at all levels. At the same time, the newly created Executive Boards, were mainly manned by professional managers. The task of the management was to transform the old, elite universities into mass-educational institutions. The new political belief was that every Dutch citizen should have access to higher education and, more generally, that the Netherlands had to be transformed into an economy based on knowledge. Therefore several Polytechnic Schools were upgraded into universities, for instance the *Technische Hogeschool* in Delft became Delft University and the *Rijks Landbouwhogeschool* became Wageningen University.

The second turning point took place in the 1990's and was the result of the new political climate in the Netherlands. Following the examples of England and the United States, and in line with the principles of neo-liberalism, one public service after another was either privatized completely or turned into a semi-public company. According to this ideology the universities had to undergo the same operation. By 1986, a prominent member of the social-democratic *Partij voor de Arbeid* (PvdA), Arie van der Zwan, had shown the way: he said the universities should have their own capital, should invest at their own risk in new faculties and have the possibility to hire personnel on flexible conditions. Van der Zwan was one of the founders of the Dutch New Left movement in 1965, but he soon converted to free market thinking and promptly failed as the CEO of the department store chain *Vroom en Dreesman*. Shortly hereafter he was appointed professor in Business Policy and Management at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. Van der Zwan's neo-liberal ideas were embraced by Dutch politicians, while the democratic reforms

of the sixties began to be seen as a burden. In 1997 a new Act of Higher Education was hurried through Parliament, the *Wet Moderniserend Universitair Bestuur* (MUB). From then on the power at Dutch universities fell completely in the hands of the Executive Boards. A Supervisory Board was added to each university, comparable with a Board of Commissioners in a private company. The main task of these Supervisory Boards was to decide on the salaries of the Executive Boards, which they did generously. Meanwhile, teachers and researchers were reduced to a silenced labor force. Each university had a University Council made up of elected representatives of staff and students but these councils lost most of their former power, making decisions was replaced with just giving advice. Since then teachers have been hired by the universities and were no longer public servants. Formerly, Dutch professors were appointed directly by the Queen in a personal Royal Decree but with this change universities had become employers so they founded an employers' organization to represent their interests, the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VNSU). Officially this organization replaced the existing Academic Council, which had been an advisory body to the government. Today, the VSNU is a professional lobbying association with an office in The Hague close to the Binnenhof, the seat of the Dutch government and Parliament.

The new authoritarian act on universities was implemented in 1997 without any protest. University teachers lacked the energy having just survived several rounds of budget cuts in the 1980's. A solitary reaction appeared in *Erasmus Magazine*, the weekly journal of the Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam, where I wrote: 'Around 1970 the democratization of the universities took place in the midst of

fierce discussions. Today's reversal passes in complete silence. Yet the current un-democratization of the universities is no less fundamental. Life after the new MUB act is very different. Old skills have suddenly become useless. Debating skills and democratic rules are of no use anymore. And new dangers lie in wait. Governing without checks and balances is very risky'. I predicted that so much would go wrong that within years the Dutch Parliament would have to start an official inquiry into the universities.

A Parliamentary inquiry is the ultimate weapon of the Dutch Parliament. A committee of members of the Lower House, can hear witnesses under oath. In recent years several of such inquiries were held: into the corruption among building companies, the banks after the crisis of 2008 and the privatized housing corporations, among others. In 2015 another inquiry was launched into the semi-privatized Dutch railways, the *Nederlandse Spoorwegen*, and its failure to establish a high-speed train service between Amsterdam and Brussels. Several of these inquiries are simply about the mess caused by the privatization of state services. The resemblances with the developments within Dutch universities are obvious and the mess within universities should indeed be looked at by the Dutch Parliament, the sooner the better. It is strange that the Dutch Parliament invests a lot of energy in a minor, specific problem with the Dutch railways, while ignoring the widespread problems in the educational system of the Dutch people. The reason, however, is obvious: the problems of Dutch universities and the education system in general were created by Dutch politicians themselves.

2. Debates

For a long time there has been a growing awareness that a lot is going wrong in Dutch universities. Already in 1993 Chris Lorenz, a historian at the VU-University Amsterdam, published *Van het universitaire front geen nieuws* (All quiet on the academic front). He pointed out the detrimental effect of the growth of bureaucracy and the widening gap between teaching and research. In their book *De toekomst van de universiteit* (The future of the university) a year later, Peter Baggen and Ido Weijers advised ‘do not implement a uniform system of education’ and ‘do not make universities depend on the market’. A more critical analysis was made by Gérard van Tillo in 2005 about what he called ‘the academic malaise’. Writing after his retirement, Van Tillo used his own experiences as a Theology professor at several universities to illustrate his views. In 2008 Chris Lorenz edited the collection of essays called *If you’re so smart, why aren’t you rich?* about universities, market and management. He concluded that the ‘bureaucratic nightmare’ was worse than he could have imagined fifteen years earlier when he wrote his first book on the subject. He had witnessed how the university became a battlefield dominated by New Public Management (NPM), along with the growth of the belief that institutions in the public sector should be transformed into profit making enterprises. According to Lorenz the introduction of the NPM model had stimulated ‘careerism, opportunism, willful ignorance and the disappearance of the public nature of university’. In the same year René Boomkens, professor in Cultural Studies at the University of Amsterdam, published *Topkitsch en slow science*, in which he too pointed out the great dangers of the new ‘for-profit

university’.

These books lacked any effect on the ongoing changes or policies. The same can be said about the initiatives of professors who protested against the direction taken by the Dutch government, such as the Universitair Reveil initiative of 2000. Ten years after that protest evaporated, Willem Halffman and Hans Radder wrote an ‘Academisch Manifesto’ in the philosophy journal *Krisis*. Their call for action opened with the warning that the universities were being taken over ‘by the many-headed monster of management’. A year later Ad Verbrugge and Jelle van Baardewijk edited *Waartoe is de universiteit op aarde? Wat is er mis en hoe kan het beter?* (Why is the university on earth? What is wrong and how can it be bettered), a collection of essays. The conclusion is that ‘thinking about research design and methodology’ is necessary to turn ‘the interaction of power, knowledge and ethics to a productive mix’. Academics sometimes tend to present their criticisms in learned and abstract wording, and in this case with an astonishing vagueness.

The criticisms put forward by Chris Lorenz, René Boomkens, Gérard van Tillo and others are often received with aversion in academic circles. Klaas van Berkel, a professor in Groningen, called Van Tillo ‘a failed and frustrated professor’ in one instance. With such an argumentum ad hominem he blackens the character of a colleague and thus prevents, or escapes, a serious discussion. An exchange with the governors and managers of universities is simply impossible because they keep a deathly silence. Members of the governing bodies of Dutch universities have hardly ever spent a word on the problems mentioned in the press. Their representative body the VSNU carefully stays out of any discussion. Instead it seems to

erase traces of controversial questions and persons from its website (‘page not found’ then pops up). The books by Boomkens, Lorenz and others are not mentioned on its otherwise elaborate website.

Sometimes administrators of universities are asked by the government to write a self-evaluation, but one should not expect any self-criticism in such papers. In 2001 all the universities had to evaluate the implementation of the new administrative structures compelled five years earlier by the MUB act. The Executive Boards and Supervisory Boards were all very satisfied with their own functioning and mutual co-operation. In their report *De bezinning op de MUB* (Reflection on the MUB) they gave themselves suggestions like ‘strengthening integral management’ and ‘give the deans more tools’. Managers only talk to themselves, often in their own posh journal *HO Management*. HO means Hoger Onderwijs (Higher Education), and its publisher, the privatized state publishing company SDU, promotes this journal by advertising that it supplies managers with ‘tips and tricks’. The journal is very expensive but it is worth every penny because it offers a glimpse into the closed world of university management.

Some insight into the world of educational management is also found in a book published in 2011 by the journalist Chris Tils with interviews of a few dozen directors and top managers of universities and other institutions of higher education. The author sketches the image of the ‘new administrator in education’, who is ‘incredibly incorruptible’ and shows ‘exemplary behavior’ among many other good qualities. One of the interviewed governors is Bert Molenkamp, who is allowed ample space to complain about the critical way he was portrayed in a television documentary. The documentary was about

abuses in his Amarantis Onderwijsgroep, a merger of sixty schools. Amarantis went broke a few months later and had to be dismantled, then eventually saved by the government. A committee installed by the government concluded that Bert Molenkamp, who earned 400.000 Euro a year, had reigned like a sun king and that his management team had displayed ‘improper behavior’. Even more striking is that the introduction to this book was written by Alexander Rinnooy Kan. After obtaining his Ph.D. with a dissertation titled *Machine scheduling problems*, Rinnooy Kan ended a short academic career as rector magnificus of the Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam. Around 1990, he was one of the first to promote the idea that universities are business enterprises selling a product. Following that job he switched to presiding over the largest Dutch employers’ organization, the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW), after which he became a member of the Executive Board of Holland’s largest bank, ING. He was attacked by the labor unions for his excessive salary, which in hindsight foreshadows the banking crisis. He left the bank in 2006, just in time before the banking crisis hit, when the Dutch government had to save ING Bank from collapsing. While this was happening he was already appointed president of the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER). During these years he was regarded as the most powerful man in the Netherlands. In 2012, without having published any substantial scholarly work, he was appointed as ‘universiteitshoogleraar’ at the University of Amsterdam, the most prestigious position there is in the Dutch academic world. Rinnooy Kan is a representative of the new Dutch establishment and it is no surprise that he recently became a member of the Senate of the Dutch Parliament. The fact

that he wrote an introduction to a book glorifying sometimes dubious managers in educational institutions is another revealing detail.

It is difficult to enter the closed world of higher education management. Managers never speak openly about their work, at least not to outsiders. An exception is M.J. Bassie, who after his retirement wrote an autobiographical account of a reorganization of the faculty of social sciences at the Katholieke Universiteit Brabant. He shows that there was a permanent struggle within the management level throughout the operation, which took years to carry out. The managers, Bassie writes, had created ‘a world which had hardly anything or indeed nothing in common with reality’. Bassie finishes his account with a confession: ‘I am now sick and tired, and by writing about the reorganization I have re-lived this period again and, to be honest, it did upset me’. There is only one copy of this book in any Dutch public library, the library of that same university he once managed, which now has a new English name: Tilburg University, with the adjective ‘Catholic’ left out.

3. Fraudulent research

Researchers who make up their research data have attracted much interest from the Dutch press in recent years. They are also an increasing problem for Dutch universities and by now there is a long list of exposed fraudulent scientists. The most notorious names are Diederik Stapel (Tilburg University), a psychologist who invented his own data, Roos Vonk (Radboud University), another psychologist, who used invented data to claim, for instance, that meat eaters are more violent than vegetarians. The anthropologist Mart Bax (VU-University, Amsterdam) dreamt up a whole village in the Balkans, where he personally witnessed a violent feud. Far more serious was the fraudulent medical research by Don Poldermans (Erasmus University Rotterdam), whose studies may have caused thousands of deaths worldwide (Karel Berkhout and Esther Rosenberg, NRC Handelsblad 17-11-11). Other examples are Dirk Smeesters (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Margriet Sitskoorn and Henk Jan Breukink (Utrecht University), Peter Nijkamp (VU-University, Amsterdam), Elke Geraerts (Erasmus University Rotterdam), and Jens Förster (University of Amsterdam).

All these scientists followed in the footsteps of a professor at Leiden University, René Diekstra. This psychologist had to resign in 1996 after his large scale plagiarism was discovered. The case was disturbing because Diekstra represented a highly regarded profession and a prestigious university. Diekstra also was a well-known writer of self-help books who had published one bestseller after another. A case of this gravity was unheard of and there was not even a definition of plagiarism applied to scientific studies at the time. It is

striking that the Diekstra case did not deter other scientists. On the contrary, it encouraged his colleagues to do the same, only better. Not only did the Netherlands see a growing number of such cases, Germany has seen a series of scandals about plagiarism, even involving well known politicians. It is an international problem.

When looking into the background of scientific fraud the pressure to publish is often mentioned. Indeed, since the 1990's scientists have been judged by their management, who sit counting their output: the number of articles published pro annum. The American adage 'publish or perish' was once seen in the Netherlands as ridiculous but it has become an accepted truth. Much has been written about the psyche of Diekstra, Stapel and other fraudulent scientists, suggesting that they may suffer from some mental illness. Nonetheless, among their colleagues the cause for their behavior is clear: it is 'the system'. The system is a machine for which nobody wants to be responsible although real people, usually colleagues in the next room, set it in motion and continue carrying out its functions. Every researcher at a university is processed yearly by this academic machinery. Against this background it is suspected that the number of fraudulent scientists in the Netherlands is much higher than the few dozen caught in the act. Perhaps ten percent of all scientists applies fraudulent methods on a regular basis, while many more are probably giving their figures an occasional swing in the desired direction. On top of that, publishing overlapping articles has become a widespread plague.

An even less visible aspect of the pressure to publish involves supervisors of research projects putting their names to articles written by their assistants, often Ph.D. students. This is an as yet an unidentified form of plagiarism that has not been denounced. Intimidation

by supervisors works well, and sometimes assistants are even forbidden to publish anything in their own name. Such arrangements do great damage to the careers of junior researchers. This hidden form of scientific fraud, perhaps better described as extortion, is widespread but difficult to detect because the victims would risk their position by speaking out about such arrangements.

The rather shocking recent series of cases of fraudulent research sparked a debate about 'science running off the rails' in 2013 (NRC 2-11-13). A few professors formed a group called Science in Transition advocating that the pressure to publish is a 'perverse incentive'. Initiator Huub Dijkstra, professor at the University of Amsterdam and staff member of the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), wrote: 'As long as scientists are judged by a small number of indicators, for instance the number of articles published, misconduct is encouraged' (NRC 8-1-14). Nevertheless, not everyone is convinced by this analysis. Marcel Levi, dean of the Medical Faculty of the University of Amsterdam, said in *Folia Magazine* (26-3-14): 'I do not see their point about the disrupting effect of the pressure to publish. Less successful scientists in particular are complaining about this system'. As usual, supporters of the system are eager to discredit their colleagues by calling them failures, thus brushing away their arguments and avoiding a discussion.

Publishing a continuous stream of articles is necessary these days for a career in science and the more the better, preferably only in top journals. Ranking scientific literature has become a new science in itself, Bibliometrics. It is based on the supposition that by counting citations the scientific value of a journal can be established. Ranking lists produced with these calculations are regarded as very impor-

tant, especially by university administrators. Publishing in journals at the top of these rankings is essential for fledgling scientists trying to build a career. For established scientists, like Diederik Stapel, such articles can also be profitable because they are essential in securing research funding.

With his many publications Diederik Stapel has left a mud track through science, which has to be cleaned up by his colleagues. They have to find out which articles are contaminated and have to be withdrawn. Meanwhile the bibliometricians who built Stapel up into a great scientist still have clean hands because they only count pages and articles without having any idea of their content. Diederik Stapel also caused great personal damage by destroying the careers of his assistants and Ph.D. students. Many colleagues are angry about the lenient court sentence of only 120 hours of community service (Volkskrant 1-7-13). Afterwards he published a bestselling book about the whole affair from his point of view and became even more famous than before, to the surprise of scientist and writer Rosanne Hertzberger who encountered him at a reception: 'How is it possible that someone lies and cheats and afflicts such damage to colleagues and students, and to a whole field of study, and is still walking around at ease and visiting social gatherings, while his book becomes a best-seller. This is sticking your middle finger up at your victims' (NRC 15-6-13). Willem Koops, professor of Psychology in Utrecht, said that Stapel should donate his royalties 'as a contribution to the costs of the damage he has caused' (ABG nr. 96, 2013). Diederik Stapel has now reached his final destination and became a Dutch Celebrity with his face on the cover of a popular weekly, *Vrij Nederland* (16-11-13). His autobiography, *Ontsporing* (Derailment) published in

2012 is catalogued by the Dutch National Library as: 'Highly recommended to everyone who wants to know the inner thoughts of one of the greatest illusionists in science.' Back in the world of academia it is disturbing that the officially withdrawn articles by Stapel are still being widely cited by unsuspecting colleagues.

The case of Peter Nijkamp is even more interesting, because it shows how an individual scientist can exploit the system over a whole lifetime. Peter Nijkamp was a professor of Economics at the VU-University and his downfall began with an anonymous complaint about a dissertation by one of his Ph.D. students, after it had already been accepted by the Ph.D.-committee. One of the accusations of the whistleblower was that the dissertation included texts which were already published. A new committee looked again at the dissertation and produced a critical report which was kept secret by the Executive Board of the VU-University. Only a summary of the report was published with the president of the committee, Pieter Drenth, admitting: 'Details are withheld, which are necessary to understand the case' (NRC 11-1-14).

Soon it turned out that the work of the supervisor, Peter Nijkamp, was also suspected of text recycling. Research journalists of *De Volkskrant* showed that Nijkamp had included long passages from his own earlier publications in nearly sixty percent of his articles without mentioning the sources (Volkskrant 8-1-14). Another leading newspaper, *NRC Handelsblad*, also printed the news on its front page: 'Top economist of the VU-University committed self-plagiarism' (NRC 11-1-14). A new committee, presided over by the Amsterdam emeritus professor Jaap Zwemmer, concluded that Nijkamp was guilty of 'questionable research practices' and was driven by

quantity instead of quality (VK 18-3-2015). Nijkamp's production was indeed astonishing. In 2011 he published an article every three days. He was the highest ranked on a list of economists and with his 5,398 pages he was the world champion of publishing in his field. Nijkamp had been the president of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) for many years and this position helped him reach his place of honor.

4. NWO

The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) has played an important role in stimulating fraudulent research published by Dutch scientists in recent years. The case of Peter Nijkamp can serve as an example. In 1996 Nijkamp was awarded the Spinoza award of 2,500,000 Euro, taken from the research funds of NWO. It is sometimes called the Dutch Nobel prize, although the money involved is actually twice as much. Laureates, of whom only one in four is a woman, usually spend much of this money to hire research assistants. This gives them the opportunity to put his or her name on the assistants' articles, thus the personal output of a scientist is multiplied by this process. In 2002 Peter Nijkamp became president of the NWO and kept this position for seven years, all the while forcing his publish-or-perish ideology on all Dutch academics. During those years the NWO stimulated this perverse incentive, while Nijkamp was building up his personal output with his own 'questionable research practices'. Nijkamp committed fraud to gain the maximum profit from the perverse system developed under his presidency. He can be compared with a banker who robs his own bank. This would weigh heavy in a criminal case, but in the discussion about the situation of Dutch science today it is not even mentioned. In 2008 Nijkamp was appointed to the most honorable and well paid position a scientist can reach in the Netherlands: 'universiteitsprofessor', at the VU-University. The website of the VU-University still promotes Nijkamp as 'our highest professor'. The praise continues: 'Always curious about what he does not understand, Peter Nijkamp continues to enter new fields of research. These often de-

velop into flowering fields of science'. Looking back, it was mainly the principle of honesty, which Peter Nijkamp did not understand and indeed he developed scientific dishonesty into a flowering field. Unlike Diederik Stapel, Peter Nijkamp did not accept his downfall. Now retired, he sees himself as a victim of what he calls 'rubbish' (Volkskrant 18-3-2015).

The VU-University also does not understand the conclusion of journalist and physicist Arnout Jaspers who concluded that Peter Nijkamp 'was allowed to create his own empire within science, after which it took years before someone dared to say that this emperor wears no clothes' (www.npowetenschap.nl). Colleagues soon declared having a low opinion of the scientific value of Nijkamp's work. Arnoud Boot, economics professor at the University of Amsterdam, wrote: 'the ranking of publications with numbers, with Nijkamp on top, has no relation with the quality of publications; university administrators should stay away of purely quantitative criterions; this will bring an end to text recycling too' (NRC 10-1-14). Recently a third committee has been installed with the Herculean task of examining more than a thousand books and articles published by Nijkamp. Of course this consumes a lot of time, energy and money. A much better solution would be to declare all Nijkamp's publications null and void, as their scientific worth is becoming more and more doubted and the rest is already obsolete. On the NWO website there is hardly a trace of him being its former president to be found.

A few questions remain. How is it possible that the most important, in fact the only independent Dutch funding organization for research was presided over for years by someone whose academic career was built on fraud? What does this say about the NWO as an

organization? Who was the Deep Throat whose accusations started Nijkamp's downfall? Why did he or she take such careful precautions to hide his or her identity? And why did he or she not step forward now the case has come to an end? What does this all say about the academic climate in the Netherlands?

The NWO plays a central role in the system of perverse incentives. The budget of the NWO is one fifth of the total Dutch budget for research. It has a monopoly of financing academic research in the Netherlands, which adds much to its absolute power. Unfortunately the way in which the NWO distributes this money causes an excessive waste of time and energy for Dutch scientists; half of them are wasting time writing applications for grants, while the other half is wasting time in committees writing reports to turn nearly all of them down. Of course as a result fewer and fewer scientists are willing to either send in applications or sit on NWO committees. The NWO has trouble finding people for such menial and unpaid jobs. It recently tried to lure female scientists, who remain rather underrepresented, into their committees by addressing women on its website: 'It might be profitable for you to take on such a role: enlarging your network, gaining insight in procedures of evaluation, and adding to your managerial track record'. The NWO whets the appetite by adding (including the dots): have 'a look behind the curtains...'

What is seen behind the curtains of the NWO, however, is rather disturbing. Bart Nooteboom, emeritus professor of Innovation Policy, was a member of a NWO committee and saw the shortcomings in the procedures of assessment with his own eyes. He wanted to quit but was persuaded to stay, listening to the argument that if he stayed he could contribute to change 'from within'. He wrote: 'I

agreed, but I was sorry afterwards, because change remained impossible' (Volkskrant 22-9-14). Nooteboom is not the only one who regrets such collaboration although dissent is seldom expressed publicly. Daniël Lakens, an assistant professor at the department Human-Technology Interaction of the Eindhoven University of Technology, concluded 'that hunting for grants costs more money than it yields', adding that 'nobody dares to say something about it' (NRC 25-7-13).

These days the largest funds are not provided by the NWO but by institutions of the European Union, like the European Science Foundation (ESF) and the European Research Council (ERC). The bureaucracy of these European institutions is that of the NWO squared, and criticism from scientists has doubled. The European Human Brain Project (HBP) was granted one billion Euro but soon enough more than a hundred neuro-scientists wrote an open letter to the European Commission to complain about the project's bad management, its undemocratic structure and wrong priorities. The core aim of conducting brain research became marginal while the money went elsewhere for political and economic reasons, mainly to fund technology and computers. Several prominent scientists quit the project and the whole case showed that spending a lot of money does not guarantee a lot of scientific progress (Ulrich Schnabel, *Die Zeit*, various articles 2014).

The problems of the NWO system became worse because the government allotted this institution more and more money to spend. It was a cheap gift, because the money was taken away from the budgets of the universities. In 1988 the institution was ominously renamed, up until then it had been the Netherlands Organization

for Pure Scientific Research (ZWO). The word 'pure' disappeared which indicated a new policy aiming at economic interests, actual social problems and the implementation of the results of subsidized research. Since it changed its name, the NWO's influence on the course of research in the Netherlands grew more and more. This has not been good news for everyone as Bart Nooteboom has shown that the NWO system favors certain schools of research. For instance, the NWO has favored sociology research which is closer to economics and is practiced at the universities of Utrecht and Groningen. Meanwhile it has marginalized the type of sociology taught at the University of Amsterdam, which is closer to cultural studies and history, and more oriented towards insight rather than usefulness. Also, a recent study has shown that the NWO is biased against women, as they have significantly lesser chance of winning a grant.

The managers of the NWO are very creative in finding new ways to prevent original and adventurous research. One of their methods is the introduction of 'matching' which means research is only funded if another subsidizer is found. The other subsidizer, a university or preferably an industrial company, has its own wishes so proposals tend to become diluted in order to please two or more masters. By this managerial and financial trick, the NWO can claim to finance many more projects on a yearly basis. Of course, in these procedures feasibility is considered more important than originality and creativity. Managers want to be sure the research projects they sponsor yield the results as they are promised in an application. Willem Trommel, a professor at the VU-University, wrote that the policy of the NWO is 'totally derailed' and a 'failure', because the system is too expensive, it is unfair and it stimulates research without risks (Volks-

krant 6-9-14). Interdisciplinary proposals are also less successful because they are completely outside of the framework set by the NWO (Volkskrant 22-9-14).

To avoid discussion many applications are refused by NWO on formal grounds. In other cases the NWO concludes that a proposal is worth funding but there is not enough money to award a grant. This argument also shrewdly prevents any discussion about the content of a proposal. And when criticism is mentioned, it is often beside the point, as in the case of Leonie Janssen-Jansen, associate professor in the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Amsterdam. The letter of rejection for her proposal was full of factual mistakes so she protested and eventually a special committee accepted her objections. The NWO did not agree and a law suit followed. Meanwhile the NWO hurriedly installed a permanent Committee for Integrity, hoping that the many objections they expected in the future would come to a dead end internally (Volkskrant 10-9-14). The same story is told by Bé Breij, professor in Latin at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. Her proposal was awarded the highest possible qualifications, but still was not funded (Volkskrant 7-6-14). Jos Engelen, president of the Governing Board of the NWO, reacted to the article by Leonie Janssen-Jansen by writing that the NWO 'always is in dialogue with its stakeholders' (Volkskrant 12-9-14). It is exceptional that a director of an institution like the NWO comments on a critique, but his answer still falls in line with its policy because he simply utters a senseless phrase about unspecified stakeholders.

Another problem of the NWO regime of grants is that it excludes several essential parts of the scientific process. Experiments are no

longer repeated so theories are no longer properly confirmed or falsified (Maarten Keulemans, Volkskrant 1-12-12). Such thorough projects simply are not in line with the NWO's funding policy. In the humanities, book reviewing is not counted by the NWO in the track record of an applicant and therefore, in this field, an equally important part of the scholarly process is falling away. Finding referees for submitted articles and books has become difficult for publishers, as this also is not counted in a track record. Instead, publishers are increasingly forced to pay referees compensation for their time and effort, driving the costs of scientific production up even higher. Such work is only beneficial for an unpaid referee if an anonymous judgement can damage a rival, which is another perverse incentive of modern science.

Lieke Peper of the VU-University, explains how the NWO has completely reversed the scientific process by making answers more important than questions: 'My contract defines how many AIO's (Ph.D. students) I have to deliver, how many externally acquired grants I have to obtain, how many articles I have to publish yearly'. The course of research is no longer steered by curiosity, by the intuition and creativity of scholars, but dictated by NWO managers instead. Today's leading question is: 'Which type of research can I get funding for, and what can I do within its limitations?' There is no more funding for projects with uncertain outcomes, which could nonetheless have splendid results. Also, there is no funding for long term projects, if only because the NWO and universities want to avoid being forced by law to give researchers a permanent appointment. Peper's conclusion is clear: 'The system is degenerated' (NRC 4-1-14).

Pleun van Arensbergen, a Ph.D. student at the VU-University, tells the same story. She has not submitted a proposal for her own research herself because this is only allowed once she obtains the title of doctor. Any Ph.D. proposal has to be supplied and pre-cooked by a supervising professor but Van Arensbergen refused to conform to the NWO system. She writes that there are only slight differences in quality between proposals and therefore judgements are made on other grounds, such as subjective interviews with submitters. To build up a track record, it is necessary to participate in this process repeatedly, at least four or five times. The track record of the submitter is of decisive importance for the NWO and in their view a track record is simply the number of earlier successful applications. The weighting of a track record allows for the filtering of proposals without taking into account the scholarly value of its content. Van Arensbergen predicts: 'the system will collapse' (Volkskrant 22-9-14).

The universities have adapted in a strange way to the NWO system. Knowing that nearly all applications will fail, now these also count as good results for their permanent staff. In fact, researchers are encouraged to collect failed applications and after about four they can claim a raise in salary. Other solutions would be more efficient, however. Closing the NWO and returning its research grant budget to universities could finance the studies of 10.000 students yearly. It could save many 'small scholarly fields', like philosophy, from closing down. Instead, the NWO goes on plodding along spending 600 million Euro a year and that is not an easy task for an institution without any scientific knowledge. Thus the management has to come up with ways of simply splashing out money, like the introduction

of the Spinoza award which throws ten million Euro overboard in a single shot to keep the NWO balloon in the air. The final cause of the malfunctioning of the NWO is the fact that their clerks simply carry out the wishes of the Dutch government, like the failing Dutch tax authorities, the failing Dutch National Police, the failing Dutch Railways and many other failing public services.

5. Disciplinary jurisdiction

In 2003 a new academic institution was created: the National Board of Research Integrity (LOWI). Its task is to advise universities as well as the NWO and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) 'regarding violations of norms on research integrity'. The judgements of the Board are published on its website but the cases in question are made unrecognizable in the reports, which mainly consist of dots blotting out the names of people and universities involved and many other details. Of course, once there is an independent regulating institution, more and more scientists and scholars will find their way to file a complaint. The president of the LOWI, Kees Schuyt, concluded that a better equipped disciplinary board with more power of jurisdiction is necessary, as it exists for the medical profession (Volkskrant 1-12-14). He writes that there should be 'a more sharply defined code, more authority for the LOWI', and that its advice should be binding. The LOWI should become the high court of academic justice.

A question Kees Schuyt evaded is whether the authority of the LOWI should be expanded to include the governors and managers, who are ultimately responsible at universities and research institutions. There is already a long list of failing board members that LOWI could investigate. Instead the situation is similar to the world of the banks after the crisis of 2008. In the Netherlands executive board members of failed banks were not prosecuted. Johan Graafland, professor in Economy, Business and Ethics at Tilburg University, wrote that action should have been taken: 'Failing control means guilt', he wrote, 'and in the first place for the Nederlandsche Bank (DNB, the

Dutch central bank), especially its president, Nout Wellink' (NRC 24-12-13). Nout Wellink is president of the Supervisory Board of Leiden University and has continued for years playing an identical oversight role as he had in the banking world when the crisis struck. Supervisory boards of universities are prestigious but also a mere formality and their members are never held accountable for their passivity. After so many cases of research fraud politicians thought it wise to introduce more and sharper controls on universities, which led to far higher salaries for the members of supervisory boards (NRC 15-11-13; 2-12-14). From now on the presidents of Supervisory Boards will receive 26.000 Euro per year, which brings the salary close to the average household income in the Netherlands. Other members will have a rise in salary to 17.000 Euro, which is about a social security income in the Netherlands. The difference is that these salaries are paid for just a few days' work to persons who earn their money elsewhere.

Will higher salaries lead to better controls? This is very unlikely. The next step will probably be that politicians ask for a Higher Education Authority. Establishing an Authority is the answer to all problems of today in the Netherlands (NRC 1-11-14). In recent years many Authorities have been established to solve the problems caused by the privatization of public services, so one more could not hurt. Political scientist Lenny Vulperhorst speaks of 'the mess of the privatizations' which has to be cleaned in this way (NRC 1-11-1-4). These new bureaucratic institutions are malfunctioning as well. An example is the Nederlandse Mededingingsautoriteit (NMa, the Authority for Consumers and Markets) which failed to take action when wide spread fraud in building was revealed by whistleblow-

ers. Or the Nederlandse Zorgautoriteit (NZa, the Dutch Healthcare Authority) that made a mess of its own organization and then drove a whistleblower to suicide. Yet more controls by more institutions for more money is the course always taken in Dutch politics. It would be not surprising if, within a few years, Dutch universities will have to suffer under the scourge of the Higher Education Authority or whatever impressive name they invent for it.

6. Educational fraud

Fraud is no less present in teaching than it is in research. Both teachers and students have ample possibilities for deceit and both sides benefit from delivering a university's final product in the form of a bachelor or master degree as quickly as possible. Sometimes students are nearly openly invited to fraudulent behavior. At the University of Amsterdam in 2014 an unlikely number of first-year students on an Economics and Business course passed a computer examination in statistics because a few hundred students had accidentally seen the right answers on the faculty website, before they did the on-line exam. This came to light when some students entered the correct answers in less time than it took the teachers themselves. Two months later the same blunder happened in the faculty of Psychology at the same university. Such incidents take place in the grey zone between fraud and negligence.

In individual tutorials other forms of fraudulent behavior can occur. The pressure some students exert on their teachers comes close to fraud. In 2007 *De Volkskrant* revealed such a case at the Open University on its front-page: 'Psychology teacher co-authors thesis.' According to an official report 'very weak students' had pressed teachers to work on their theses (*Volkskrant* 24-9-07). The article led to a discussion in Parliament and, in response to the scandal, the Open University minimized the situation as a one-off incident and filed a complaint against *De Volkskrant* with the Netherlands Press Council. Yet it is general knowledge that coaching of students, not only at the Open University, often includes rewriting papers and sometimes providing a lot of additional writing. A teacher usually

has to do much editing on most theses before an acceptable level is reached.

The same methods are common with regard to dissertations. Again such practices are carefully concealed from the public eye. Sandra Schruijer, professor of the Psychology of Organisations at Utrecht University, published details about a dissertation which should not have passed but without mentioning which university or revealing the name of the Ph.D. student. Schruijer's dissenting voice was ignored by the committee of Utrecht University because each successful Ph.D. earns a university nearly 100.000 Euro paid by the Dutch government, which is another perverse incentive (NRC 25-1-14). The situation elsewhere in Europe is not that different. And there are even worse cases. In Germany dozens of professors were ready to be bribed for accepting dissertations, while one professor had even written dozens for paying Ph.D. students (Jochen Leffers in Spiegel-on-line; Christopher F. Schuetzemarch in New York Times 11.3.13).

The perverse incentives in teaching are similar to those in research. Universities are financed by the government according to the number of bachelor and master degrees they yield. The higher the output, the more money they receive. This system inevitably leads to the standards of examinations lowering to the most extreme point and teachers regularly 'helping' weak students to reach the finish. In the process the link between teaching output and salary becomes more and more direct. The University of Amsterdam pays teachers in the faculty of Political Science individually for each accepted thesis they have supervised (Volkskrant 13-4-13). Indeed, teachers are now paid by the piece like nineteenth-century laborers. It is a return

to the financial model of that era and before, times when professors were paid on the spot in cash by their students after a successful examination.

This way of financing universities makes students and teachers aim for the lowest marks necessary, after all why make any extra effort if just above unsatisfactory is perfectly good for everyone involved? Not everyone blames perverse financial incentives for this low quality educational culture, at least not among the readers of *HO Management*. Wim Groot and Henriëtte Maassen, both professors in Evidence Based Education at Maastricht University, wrote in this glossy monthly in October 2010 that 'it is not the managers or the system that are guilty for the erosion of the quality of education, but the teachers themselves'. According to this duo, teachers let weak students pass examinations because of their 'indolence' or 'pity'. Institutional fraud is of course much more serious than incidental breaches by individual students or teachers. Lowering standards make studies easy enough for every student to pass. The greatest scandal of this type took place in 2010 at the InHolland University of Applied Sciences. Weak students were offered a 'shorter route' to earn a certificate at this university and more than 500 students took up the offer (Volkskrant 11-4-14). A committee was installed to investigate this procedure and it concluded that these 'shorter routes' were illegal. Afterwards it became clear that this procedure was known of and probably supported at the highest level. The affair ended with the resignation of all members of both the Executive Board and the Supervisory Board (Volkskrant 11-4-14).

In 2013, after years of silence, students started to complain about the situation. Tycho Wassenaar, a student at Utrecht University,

wrote: ‘Universities and the State Secretary of Education seem to be unaware of how easily students saunter through their studies. The chronic lack of real, good teaching is seldom admitted’ (Volkskrant 15-11-13). He saw the financing linked to the number of passed students as the main cause: ‘For this reason it is attractive for universities that many students finish their studies as quickly as possible’. Gunnar de Haan, president of the Board of Students of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Amsterdam, called it the ‘ridicule of education’ and called for protest (Folia Magazine 29-9-14). Since then, over the last two years more and more students have been protesting against the low level of teaching. Marijn van Dijk, who studied Dutch language and went on to a Master’s degree in teaching at the VU-University, wrote: ‘The Master for teachers at this university has no content and accepts no critical thinking’ (Volkskrant 24-10-14).

Despite the resemblances, there is a fundamental difference between the workings of perverse incentives in teaching as compared to research. While individual researchers profit directly from their fraud, teachers do not profit from pushing so many students through their courses as quickly as possible. The pressure to reduce students’ achievements to quantifiable output is exerted by the government on the administrators of universities. They are the ones who directly profit seeing the budgets grow and their salaries rise. The next step is that the managers transform their perverse incentive into an equally perverse pressure on teachers who are silently forced towards fraud. Teachers do not feel incentives themselves, let alone gain from the process. Instead, they are punished if students do not finish their courses in time. The punishment usually consists of a

negative comment on their yearly reports, which can result in their dismissal. There is only one reward for good teaching. The management of each university organizes a yearly election of ‘teacher of the year’. Upon closer consideration, however, this ceremony is a public humiliation because the chosen teacher has to pretend to be happy with a tin medal. Recently, the government has found a solution for the fundamental problem of lowering standards: from now on students are only allowed to continue their studies if their average score is a seven out of ten, instead of the former minimum of six. The outcome of this strategy can be predicted: a further inflation of marks given for examinations.

7. Inspection

Dutch education, from kindergarten to university, is suffering under an ever expanding system of control mechanisms. There is a clear link between the ongoing budget cuts and the strengthening of top-down control. The development started in the 1990's. At first the universities themselves set up a system of committees visiting faculties every six years to report on the quality of teaching. In 2005 this was replaced by a much more rigorous system. A special bureau was founded, the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) with an office in The Hague, the center of political power. In addition the Quality Assurance of Netherlands Universities (QANU) was set up, with a seat in Utrecht and a controversial administrator of Utrecht University, Jan Veldhuis, as president. These institutions do not have staff with any knowledge about the subjects they are inspecting so they have to hire scientists and scholars to do their work. These visitations are becoming more time consuming for universities staff who are obliged to provide reports with self-evaluations. Faculties are even holding rehearsals, asking colleagues or even hiring actors to play the role of the inquisitors. These inspections are a heavy burden on faculties, but still the administrators are madly enthusiastic. When the NVAO celebrated its first five years of existence S.W.J. Lamberts, rector of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, praised the institution in his lustrum speech: 'The introduction of accreditation for all studies regulated by law under the NVAO proved to be a blessing. This sword of Damocles brought a sense of urgency to improve teaching. Substantial operations were beneficial for the quality, but also for the recognition of

our teaching'. The NVAO was pleased and proud, and these words serve as a motto in its fifth annual report. The rector's words also show the current love for references to a subject which has nearly completely disappeared from Dutch universities, classical languages and history. Dutch university administrators like to compare themselves unknowingly to ancient dictators, in this case the tyrant of Syracuse who made a fool of his courtier Damocles.

In 2014 the sword of Damocles actually struck 45 departments. After a negative evaluation the staff are usually allowed one or two years to mend their teaching practices. For students such a negative judgement is even more painful than it is for teachers because they become aware that their certificates will later be distrusted. Andries de Grip, director of the Research Centre for Education and the Labor Market (ROA) of Maastricht University, affirmed the negative consequences for students with a 'degraded certificate' (Volkskrant 3-9-14). The VNSU fobbed off the duped students by telling them that their certificates will still be legally valid (Volkskrant 3-9-14). Of course, this is only a formal truth.

The newly created external bureaucracy of the NVAO and the QANU also caused a growth of the internal bureaucracy of the Dutch universities. Internal controls of examinations, theses and in fact everything else, have become stricter and more time consuming than ever. Ten years ago, an individual supervisor was trusted to give an official grade and it was only in the case of a bachelor or master thesis that a second opinion from faculty colleagues was required. Today, teachers are systematically deployed as controllers of their colleagues. Repression has the whole educational system in its grip, reflecting society as a whole. In the education field, the government

simply solves budget problems with new rules, more controls and increasingly severe punishments. This contributes a lot to the growing work burden on teachers, which has more than doubled in only a few years. The perverse incentives created for teaching are leading to even greater abuses than those in research.

Anne Flierman, president of the NVAO, is one of the very few administrators to have ever answered criticisms of their organizations (NRC 25-8-14). He wrote that good education in the first place needs 'the best administrators', indeed that 'only more administrative attention on teaching at universities can elevate its level'. And he continues: 'It is chiefly and in the first place a task for the management, the administrators and supervisory boards of the universities'. He argues that a 'great extension of administrative attention' is needed. Flierman is repeating himself constantly here but his message is clear: only more controls and more bureaucracy can save the universities. He does not mention who will pay for such a development. Nonetheless, the answer is also clear: it will be the teachers and the students.

8. Administrators

The change from the relatively democratic regulation of the WUB act of 1971 to the MUB act of 1997, with its autocratic regulation, brought about a complete reversal within the Dutch universities. Before this change, the administrators and non-academic staff supported the research and teaching done by the academic staff, the so-called professionals. After 1997, a centralized management began giving orders from on high to the professionals at the level of the faculties and departments, who from then on only had to obey. The scholars and scientists, who do the real work of teaching and research, were reduced to subordinates at the behest of the wisdom of their managers. The new act aimed for greater efficiency so all faculty meetings were abolished or reduced to mere formality. Also academic appointments were for the most part no longer decided by committees. 'Flash appointments', the term coined by the VU-University researcher Peter de Waard, is the practice that has since become more common. He used it to criticize the appointment of a new rector magnificus at his university (NRC 18-5-13). The character of the administration has changed as universities had to be transformed into a sort of business company. The new MUB act created the Executive Boards and Supervisory Boards, for which the government recruited big shots from the worlds of business and banking. Knowledge of academic culture was not needed, or even explicitly undesirable. Today 'white men in grey suits' have nearly all of the seats in these high academic colleges, as a survey revealed (Volkskrant 25-12-14).

Several tycoons of industry have seats on the Supervisory Boards

of universities: Hans Smits, CEO of the Port Authority of Rotterdam (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Jeroen van der Veer, former CEO of Shell (TU Delft), Anton van Rossum, former CEO of the now defunct Fortis Bank (Erasmus University Rotterdam). Tjibbe Jousstra, who was dismissed as president of the Netherlands Employee Insurance Agency (UWV), then appointed as National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism, and now president of the Dutch Safety Board (University of Groningen). Last but not least Nout Wellink, the even more controversial former president of the Dutch Central Bank (DNB), presides the Supervisory Board at Leiden University.

The norms and values of these people were soon adopted within, or forced upon the universities. The highest truth today is that money rules the academic world. Thomas von der Dunk wrote ‘In the 1990’s the president of the Executive Board of Utrecht University, Jan Veldhuis, tried to multiply his salary with the argument “that his current salary was a joke in his circle “. A few years later the salaries of all university administrators had seen a rise of 60%. Von der Dunk concludes ‘the mental orientation of the university administrators is that of money and oil magnates’ (Volkskrant 1-7-13). In 2011, the maximum salary of university administrators was raised to 130% of that of the salary of a Dutch government minister. However, in that year there were several administrators receiving salaries above the new maximum. This was legal according to the MUB act of 1997 because the Supervisory Boards had decided on their salaries. After the maximum salary was introduced, the government was eventually forced in 2013 to reclaim a sum from the University of Groningen because its president was still being paid too high a salary. This cul-

ture of excessive salaries is not only a financial problem, the state of affairs has also damaged the image of Dutch universities.

The Algemene Onderwijs Bond, a teachers’ union, published a list in 2011 of the top fifteen best paid administrators in higher education. At the top was Bert Molenkamp, president of the Amarantis Onderwijsgroep with a salary of 400.000 Euro a year. Second was Aalt Dijkhuizen of Wageningen University, who earned 344.000 Euro with bonuses and extras. Number three was René Smit of the VU-University, with earnings close to 300.000 Euro a year. Molenkamp caused the bankruptcy of his institution, while Smit left after a hefty conflict and a series of scandals about research fraud and mismanagement. Both received a golden handshake upon leaving, which again led to protests. High salaries are often justified by the argument that good administrators cannot be found for less money. The examples of Molenkamp and Smit’s incompetence show that either their salaries were not high enough, or high salaries actually attract the wrong kind of person.

Modern university administrators feel more at home in the corporate world and they often stress that their real interests lay outside academia. Marjan Oudeman, president of Utrecht University, boasted on a television program that in her role she could ‘just as well be the CEO of a multinational cookies factory’. She had an MA in law and never taught or did research in her career. She does have a typical side job as a member of the Board of Commissioners of a company ominously named Scrap Metals. In 2005 she was number one on a list of mighty business women in the Netherlands published by the weekly *FEM Business*. She was also a Supervisory Board member of the Dutch Railways (NS), which is now subject to a Parliamentary

inquiry because of mismanagement. After the banking crisis of 2008 she was appointed to the Supervisory Board of the ABN-Amro/Fortis bank, which was then saved from collapse by the Dutch state. She was appointed to her position at Utrecht University to look at the 'business of science with external eyes' (Volkskrant 13-4-13). In 2015 she and two other members of the Executive Board spent 250.000 Euro of university money on travel, an amount so excessive that it led to a reprimand by the Dutch Minister of Economy. To put this into perspective, a part-time teacher earns about 600 Euro for a six week course. Her excessive spending is widely seen as corruption but maybe she is simply doing what she was asked to do: implementing the 'business of science' at Utrecht University.

The president of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, Pauline van der Meer Mohr, preferred to talk about being a board member for the chemical company Royal DSM (formerly Dutch State Mines) in a radio interview rather than about her work for the university. She has the same position in another big company called ASML. She was appointed to the university in 2006, coming from the Dutch ABN-Amro Bank and has since returned to the world of banking as a non-executive Director of the British bank HSBC. For such businesswomen a university role is obviously only a second rate opportunity. René Smit's career followed a similar pattern. When he became president of the VU-University in 2005 he had been a member of the Rotterdam city council, responsible for the massive seaport. In an interview he compared the work of a university with that of the port of Rotterdam, equating students with containers: bring in as many as possible and get rid of them as quickly as possible. René Smit soon left the university for a more suitable position at a consulting firm.

Such interviews reveal a lot about the mentality at the administrative top level of Dutch universities today. Comparing a university with a cookie factory and students with containers is a deliberate show of contempt for the academic community. They must be aware of the reciprocal contempt that a large part of the Dutch academic community feels towards them. These administrators do not have authority, they only possess power. In addition, the awareness that they are enriching themselves at the expense of their personnel, the teachers, significantly affects the working relation. The transformation of universities into businesses has been a success for the top administrators who have secured the highest possible salaries by reducing the wages of the teachers to the lowest possible minimum. In this, Dutch universities reflect a world-wide development of better paid managers and declining wages for workers. The work arrangement for newly hired teachers and researchers is now equal to that of postal workers who have been reduced to underpaid flex workers with zero hour contracts since the privatization of the former Netherlands Post Office in the 1990's.

The new type of administrator's takeover in the new top-down structure has made a different kind of people feel at home in universities of today. The type that enjoys making a career in authoritarian organizations differs from academics found in the more democratic and egalitarian situation of twenty years ago. Fenna Poletiek, a psychologist at Leiden University, pointed this out in her analysis of the case of the academic swindler Diederik Stapel: 'Scientists are people who adapt to the way their organizations distribute rewards in order to reach their personal goals.' Scientists who feel at home in the new order now dominate the universities. Some of them, at a cer-

tain point in their career, crossover and become fulltime managers.

The new managers have also created a new type of student. The student of their brave new world always keeps to deadlines, never has a contrary opinion, does not complain and pays tuition fees on time. Last but not least, the new student has good manners. In fact, the president of the University of Amsterdam, Louise Gunning, personally gave selected students a special course in table manners. More recently she was forced to resign because she called in riot police against her students who were protesting peacefully against her authoritarian style of management and the enormous budget cuts caused by bad investments and unwise building policies. One day after her resignation, she was reappointed as ‘universiteitsprofessor’, the most prestigious chair of the University of Amsterdam. This was another brash show of power and a humiliation for the protesting teachers and students.

In 2013 a conference was held at the VU-University on the subject of ‘the manager’s university’ with higher administrators conspicuous by their absence (NRC 18-5-13). This is part of a pattern of these people systematically evading public discussion. Instead of participating in discussions, modern university managers create distance and even fear within their organizations. This is the usual tactic for those with no moral or intellectual authority who only rely on brute power. The press constantly mentions the ‘culture of fear’ which is widespread across Dutch higher education. This is an unsettling development. *De Volkskrant* wrote that an employee in the Department of Economics at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences was said to have been fired because of his critical attitude (4-11-12). The specific reason was an email about defects on

the computer system he had sent to the director Jet Bussemaker, who is now the Dutch Minister of Education. Fifty teachers wrote a letter to the administration in support of the dismissed employee as well as complaining about the coming and going of managers and the high frequency of dismissals in their faculty. Another newspaper, *De Telegraaf*, also wrote about the culture of fear at this institution. This is by no means an isolated case, for instance Matthias van Rossum wrote a year later that fear also reigns among the academic staff at the VU-University (NRC 18-5-13).

Folia Magazine revealed that a culture of fear was poisoning the atmosphere at the Amsterdam University College and that students were warned not to speak about their situation (6-11-13). Putting a ban on free speech has become a much used management tool in Dutch academia. Marc Chavannes revealed that the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) had forbidden the staff of their institutes to speak about budget cuts and merger plans (NRC 5-4-14). The KNAW denied this and the staff kept silent because, of course, it is also forbidden to reveal that there is a ban on free speech. Censorship takes many forms, varying between the formal and the informal. It is not known how many scientists and scholars in the Netherlands work under an official ban of speech but an educated guess is several hundreds and it could easily be thousands. In fact, Nicolai Petkov, a professor in Groningen, made clear that there is a universal informal ban on free speech at all Dutch universities and research institutes. He says: ‘Many people prudently keep silent. They fear that otherwise the management will look at their work with an unfavorable attitude’ (NRC 24-5-14).

Being an isolated social group, the university managers have

developed their own language and vocabulary which is constantly adapted to the needs of the moment. Language is an important management tool. New terms are frequently introduced and forced upon those in lower ranks, eventually sinking down to the teachers and researchers, who form the lowest regions of Dutch academia. These words, like excellent, best practices, proximity and valorization, are often taken from an international language of education management. The prefix 'top' is very popular, every Dutch university wants to be a top university with top professors, and unfortunately for them they already have top managers.

An interesting aspect is how words can change in the mouths of managers. Often a word used by a manager acquires a completely opposite meaning. For instance, the Dutch Minister of Education Jet Bussemaker speaks about her love for 'competent rebels', 'contrary thinkers' and 'constructive opponents', always meaning the opposite. Some words are completely new, like 'dynamiseren' for which the English equivalent could be 'dynamize'. It was invented by an administrator of Utrecht University. Its official meaning is making time allotted to research 'dynamic' but in practice it means the abolition of research time for individual scholars. Some words gain additional meanings, like the word 'excellent' which became a brand name. In 2008 managers held a 'national excellence summit' to brainstorm about 'excellentie-trajecten', a kind of honors course. They intended to lure more students to higher education just as the word is used in supermarkets as a selling point for products of supposedly better quality, and thus more expensive. Meanwhile, there is an inflation of language and titles in general. The title 'university' has recently been officially bestowed upon practical schools for higher education,

which is another example of word inflation.

Many of the manager's words are actually English without any attempt to look for a Dutch equivalent, like honors course, bench marking or leadership lab. Sometimes unusual Dutch words are introduced, like 'borgen', which on a closer inspection is an odd translation of the English manager's favorite 'safeguard'. Academic new-speak has become a language of its own; in fact a dictionary would be very useful. An interesting aspect is the often aggressive tone in their choice of words. According to their language science became warfare. Universities are fighting each other in the 'war for talent'. The NWO has named its three major grants 'Veni, Vidi, and Vici', borrowing from a well-known Roman general and dictator. All management has become 'strategic' and this is reflected in the battlefield that the Dutch academic landscape has become. Language is the secret weapon in this battle, launched by managers to safeguard their own excellent positions.

University administrators have become part of what Paul Frentrop, professor of Corporate Governance at Nyenrode Business University, has defined as 'the new elite' (NRC 16-2-13). In his view they are 'a self-serving clique' and the Netherlands is now being governed by a group of semi-public managers, 'who are rewarded for services they do not deliver'. He cites Pepijn van Houwelingen, who wrote in *De Volkskrant* that the 40.000 best-paid persons in the public sector cost the tax payer more than all welfare paid for Social Security and to the unemployed. He also cites Jos van Heze-wijk, director of Elite-Research, a private institution, who calls this cartelization and concluded that since the 1970's a completely new layer of administration has been created consisting of semi-public

organizations, which is immune to crisis and critique.

The same development has taken place in Dutch cultural institutions. Over the same time period ‘the old boys network was implemented in the world of the Dutch museum’ concluded sociologist Don Elshout (Volkskrant 8-11-13). Membership of the supervisory boards of prestigious cultural institutions lends a cultural veneer to both university administrators and industrial CEO’s. On the board of the Concertgebouw Orchestra we find Louise Fresco (Wageningen University), Yvonne van Rooy (Utrecht University), Louise Gunning (University of Amsterdam), and the omnipresent Alexander Rinnooy Kan. The board of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra includes René Smit (VU-University), the Rijksmuseum has Marjan Oudeman (Utrecht University) and the Nederlands Dans Theater has Pauline van der Meer Mohr (Erasmus University Rotterdam), to give only a few examples. A very small new Dutch elite are constantly trading places in positions of power. For instance, Louise Gunning (University of Amsterdam) received a seat on the influential Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER), while around the same time its president Alexander Rinnooy Kan became a ‘university professor’ at the University of Amsterdam. A sociological study on the new Dutch elite would be very interesting, but it would be impossible to find funding for such a project.

9. Real estate

1995 marked an important turning point for the ownership of buildings that house Dutch universities. Until that year, most of them were owned by the Dutch state. Then they were handed over to the universities but it was a poisonous gift because the universities were made responsible for maintenance, renovation and erecting new buildings for the growing number of students, without being given any additional funding. The gift was backhanded for another reason, it meant taking on a great risk. Many university buildings were built in the 1970’s, when American style campuses were developed here and there, like the Uithof in Utrecht and Woudestein in Rotterdam. After years of neglect they needed modernization or replacement. The Dutch state had gotten rid of an unwanted obligation just in time.

Ewald Engelen, professor of Economics and Geography at the University of Amsterdam showed in an article in *De Correspondent* how his university has been caught up in the world of building and banking ever since, with disastrous effects. Around the year 2000, Dutch universities were infected by the national real estate euphoria and saw themselves as big players in property development. Even after the bubble burst, the university administrators held on to this risky strategy, still believing it would be profitable. In their words: ‘Housing is an important strategic tool, because a new building is attractive to students and employees’ (HO Management 5-11). Indeed, universities have stepped up their building activities in recent years, following the American trend to invest in campus restaurants and sport accommodations to attract students.

By starting large scale building projects, the University of Amsterdam expected to win what the managers called the ‘war for talent’. Merged faculties are compressed into newly built complexes, usually found outside the city center on cheaper land. These buildings have the great advantage of ‘proximity’, according to the managers. At least that is what the vice-president wrote in a propaganda leaflet *Binnenstadscampus* (nr.1, October 2014). Proximity, he writes, ‘will cause an enormous explosion of knowledge’.

The truth is completely different, but then again truth is no longer of interest to university managers. From the start, everything went wrong with the real estate adventures of the University of Amsterdam. First, it went into business with a property developer who turned out to be involved in large scale fraud. This is not unusual in the Netherlands construction world, in fact the Parliament held an inquiry into the widespread corruption in this sector. Then came the banking crisis of 2008, it affected the university’s unwise investment of 255 million Euro on financial derivatives. The result has been massive debt for the university, projected to rise to 400 million Euro by 2018. The university has tried to hide its financial incompetence by creating new managerial positions with pompous titles like ‘Chief Risk and Security Officer’ and ‘Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager’. Nonetheless, the problems are there and the bill is paid by teachers and researchers, who are pushed to the margins of the organization. Even though all Dutch universities claim that their financial disasters do not harm teaching and research, it is common knowledge that the truth is different. The financial yearly reports are made non-transparent by accountants trained in concealing unwanted facts. It is nevertheless obvious that teachers are

the real expensive part of the budget so reducing their number is the only way to spend less and pay back debts. This development is, once again, part of an international phenomenon. In the United States, for instance, two thirds of the private institutions for higher education have moved into the danger zone as a result of risky investments, as Mark C. Taylor wrote.

Once, the University of Amsterdam was proud of its historic buildings in the city. It was founded in 1632 as an Athenaeum and housed in a former catholic chapel that dated back from the fifteenth century. In 1877 the institution acquired university status and began to occupy public buildings which had lost their function, like the House for Old Men and Women and the Women’s House of Correction. In the twentieth century, modern office buildings were added like the jugendstil Witte Huis and the art-deco Bungehuis. Several faculties were located alongside the most famous Amsterdam canals. All of these buildings were shown in all their glory in an illustrated guide published by Hilde de Haan and Ids Haagsma in 2000. Then there was an updated guide published in 2012 by Alexander Reeuwijk and Sytze van der Veen, sponsored by the university itself. Looking back on these guides, the second was a sales catalogue in disguise because, in just a two years since, all these buildings have either been sold already or are currently for sale. Even the Maagdenhuis, headquarters of the university, a former orphanage built in the eighteenth century, will be abandoned. These buildings will mostly be transformed in hotels, although the Bungehuis will notably be a private club for the very wealthy, which is appropriate as this is exactly how Dutch universities see themselves (Het Parool, 20-6-2015).

The massive construction activities are more than financial invest-

ments for the universities. Grandiose building is typical for authoritarian regimes. Large, tall buildings are an expression of power. In Amsterdam this is reflected in the way the University of Amsterdam tried to force through a monstrous new building in the center of the city, and in the process wanted to demolish two old buildings which are classified as monuments. The designs for the new building were made in 1997 and it would have been as tall as a nearby seveneenth-century tower. Usurping and demolishing listed monuments is the ultimate show of power in Amsterdam, especially since the inner city of Amsterdam is on the UNESCO World Heritage List, which makes the challenge of such barbaric acts even more attractive and prestigious to the university management. Of course, heritage organizations, local inhabitants and their own staff were opposed to this plan. A lot of money was spent on law suits up to the Supreme Court in the Netherlands, and even hiring or bribing professor F. Asselbergs, the former director of the Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency, to declare these threatened monuments worthless and thus helping to build the case for their plans. Wim Denslagen, professor in the History of Architecture at Utrecht University, wrote a counter report stressing their importance, which was more convincing. Finally, the university lost and was denied permission. Over more than ten years, heaps of money had been wasted on the project, again at the expense of teachers and their salaries. These expenses will be investigated as part of a research committee on the financial mismanagement of the University of Amsterdam at some point. This committee was established in 2015 but has been then crippled by quarrels and sabotage from the beginning.

The situation is similar at the other university in Amsterdam, the

VU-University. Plans for the renovation of its campus were made in 2005 and the university raised funds by borrowing 750 million Euro and investing in financial derivatives, which soon led to losses of nearly 80 million Euro. Despite the obvious risks of such investments, another 50 million Euro worth of derivatives was bought in 2011. By 2010 the amount of rent to be paid was 1,5 million euro a year. The burden of yearly interest is increasing rapidly (Campus 22-7-12). Meanwhile, the VU-University is scraping money away from every possible corner. Even a room which housed a small museum of the Dutch poet Willem Bilderdijk, run by volunteers, had to be closed. Bilderdijk was a famous Calvinist poet whose works and ideas were important parts of the religious background of the university. This seems to matter no more since it was recently renamed the VU-University and this transformation has effectively wiped out its own history and in one sweep the new rector magnificus has also proposed closing their whole history faculty.

The Dutch Minister of Education, Jet Bussemaker, has expressed her opinion on these financial disasters: they do not matter, as they are a logical consequence of transforming universities into for-profit companies. In the business world risks and losses are all in the game, she says. How the VU-University will remedy its losses is not yet clear. Currently, half of the Dutch universities have invested in risky derivatives, which have made losses of 216 million Euro so far. In the last fifteen years the administrators of Dutch universities saw themselves as bankers. This is no surprise, because the Supervisory Boards, established to control them, mainly consist of bankers and businessmen who only encourage such enterprises. After the banking crisis of 2008, however, the administrations of universities are

more like private equity companies. Their goal is now to strip their organizations of the non-profitable branches such as history, philosophy, Latin, Greek, Hebrew and other so-called marginal studies. The university of the future will be lean and mean, but can it still be called a university?

10. KNAW

The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) was founded in 1808 by the first Dutch King, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. Up until around 1990, this illustrious institution stood on the sidelines of academic life. Membership was above all an honor for successful scholars and scientists. The institution was portrayed, as it was some decades ago, by one of its employees Han Voskuil in *Het Bureau*, a bestselling six volume novel about the author's alter ego, a clumsy folklorist. Since then, the KNAW has evolved into an important player in the business of science. It administers several research institutes, including the Meertens Institute for Research and Documentation of Dutch Language which is the modern reincarnation of the institute where Voskuil once worked. The Academy is an advisory body for the government and, in an uneasy combination, it also implements government policy. The Academy has been the motor behind developments in education and culture which have encountered much resistance in recent years, especially those that have led to the marginalization of the humanities. An example is the way the KNAW brought down the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) in Leiden. This institute was established in 1851 and had a great tradition of researching the countries and regions associated with the Netherlands' colonial past. An immense library was collected at the institute and it was set up with its own publishing house for the results of its research. In 2001 this institute was placed under the umbrella of the KNAW, which has since proceeded to dismantle it. The publishing house was disposed of in 2012 and the famous library was passed onto the

Leiden University Library. The story of the destruction of this institute is briefly told on its website: '[After the publishing house was gone] the KITLV lost its second, oldest and most important pillar, the development and care of its world famous collections. This has been very painful for the institute, especially for the curators of its collection who have either been moved to the university library or fired' (www.kitlv.nl/our-history).

The original plan the KNAW had in store for the KITLV was much worse. At first it was thought that it should be transferred to Amsterdam to fully merge with other KNAW institutions. The presidents of the KNAW, Robbert Dijkgraaf and Hans Clevers, made sure that other humanities institutes did not escape this fate: the Meertens Institute, the Dutch Institute of War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and Huygens Institute for the History of the Netherlands (itself the result of a fusion of two separate institutes) all have to merge into the new, mainly digital, Humanities Centre in Amsterdam (NRC 5-4-14). The KNAW is also intending to close the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies (NIAS) which is a place for international scholars to enjoy a year of research, discussion and writing. It was established in 1970 with the famous institutes in Stanford and Princeton as its model. Located in an old residence in dunes near The Hague it was fondly remembered by Fritz Stern in a recent article (*New York Review of Books*, 7-5-15). Liesbeth Koenen, one of last scholars who got the chance to work at the NIAS, expects a definitive closure of the institution, with just a few fellowships surviving at the new Humanities Centre, to be sponsored by external funds (NRC 12-3-14). Emeritus professor H.W. von der Dunk called the policy of the KNAW the 'autism of power'. With the end of the

NIAS he saw the last resort for free scholarship disappear (*Volkskrant* 3-1-14).

The KNAW wanted to squeeze all of their humanities institutions into the Royal Dutch Tropical Institute (KIT) building in Amsterdam. This happened to be vacant because the institute was closed by the Dutch government as part of its war on culture. The policy of the KNAW makes it clear once again that the cultural heritage built up over generations can be annihilated in a few years. The planned 'palace for the humanities' is a horror scenario for the members of the merging institutes. And within the inner circles of the KNAW resistance is growing. Willem Frijhoff and Maria Grever are both members of the KNAW and jointly wrote an open letter about their own Academy forcing its institutions into an absurd relocations and reorganizations, costing ten million Euro and on top of that causing a loss of staff (*Volkskrant* 18-2-14). The managers of some KNAW institutes have a different view. Henk Wals, director of the International Institute for Social History (IISG) is enthusiastic because, in his view, the humanities are a 'rather mixed bag' and 'digital humanities have the potential to create the possibility of great research questions' (*Volkskrant* 9-2-14). The IISG itself has important collections and archives of left wing movements from all over Europe, including the papers of Marx and Engels whose portraits were recently removed from the institute walls to fall in line with the new order. It is unlikely that Wals' view is shared by his archivists and librarians. Marc Chavannes, a well-known journalist, has denounced the 'nomenklatoera' of the KNAW and their 'strong language about big data sets, digital matrixes, standardized metadata, the economics of scale and quality impulses'. The KNAW is ruled by scientists who became

managers, including its director Hans Chang, who was a director of the NWO-affiliated Foundation for Fundamental Research on Matter. These persons see the humanities as a luxury they no longer want to afford. Incidentally, Chang called his office, a monumental seventeenth-century building on an Amsterdam canal, ‘the admiral’s ship of the KNAW fleet’ (NRC 1-6-13). Such metaphors are typical of the new generation of science managers. Science has become warfare and by orders of Admiral Chang a whole fleet is to be sunk to the bottom. The scholars of the KNAW humanities institutes are the first to drown, but still they keep silent. Only Jeltje Zijlstra, a researcher at the Huygens-ING Institute, dared to speak out (Volkskrant 4-3-14). She concluded that the fusion between the Institute for Dutch History and the Huygens Institute, a forced marriage between history and literature, had been ‘fruitless’. The managers’ dreams of ‘cross-fertilization’ did not happen and she predicts that further clustering of institutes is doomed for shipwreck as well.

11. Status

In former times, professors enjoyed high esteem in the Netherlands but in the last decades a decline took place in the social standing of the whole field of education. At the universities, this process of downsliding started around 1970. In a book published in 1977, journalist Herman Vuijsje introduced his readers to a certain Eric, ‘in his early thirties, teacher at one of the universities’, presenting him as an example of the ‘culture of laxity’. This stereotyping was successful in that it stuck and contributed to an accelerating degradation of teachers. Academics were soon aware of what was happening. Historian and professor Willem Frijhoff wrote in 1986 in *Quod Novum*, the weekly paper of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, that students are seen as ‘parasites’ and that the image of teachers was even worse: ‘They are depicted as slackers.’

This degradation led to a new social mechanism within the universities. Since 2003 the KNAW appoints ‘Academy professors’. These chosen few receive a million Euro and are allowed to spend their time and money independently over five years. The Executive Boards of Dutch universities are invited to nominate professors aged between 54 and 59 years old. In addition, the universities introduced the ‘university professor’, a rather tautological title, with the same privileges. The selection procedures are kept secret, and often an appointment is merely a reward for management duties. The VU-University, for example, made the fraudulent Peter Nijkamp its first ‘university professor’.

The ‘Academy’ and ‘university’ professors are part of a new elite, which is symptomatic of the tendency within universities towards

widening internal divisions. While the position of young scientists is worsening, the aging top brass is creating expensive titles and positions to safeguard their own status. In this, universities reflect society as a whole, as the social and economic gap is widening between high and low, rich and poor.

Until the mid-1990's, professors and teachers had been appointed through open selection procedures. Those whose work involved both teaching and research had a trial period of four years before receiving a permanent contract. Four years was indeed enough time to establish someone's qualities. A permanent position at a university not only brings economic security but also guarantees the independence of a scholar and by extension academic freedom in general. One could have a different view from a supervising professor without running the risk of dismissal.

Dutch universities used to be flat organizations. Scientists treated each other as equals, discussions were open, data were shared and ideas were exchanged. This is all something of the past. The permanent appointment has de facto been abolished with the 'tenure track' appointment now in its place. The idea was imported from America where a tenure track actually gives some form of security and prospects. In the Netherlands the system was nominally introduced 'to give talented young scientists the prospect of tenure', as can be read in a report by SoFoKleS, an institute made up of universities and labor unions founded in 2008. In reality, the tenure track was introduced to undermine and finally abolish normal appointment procedures. In practice the tenure track in Dutch universities was introduced to postpone tenure for as long as possible, or, even better, avoid it completely. SoFoKleS is the abbreviation for the Social

Fonds voor de Kennis Sector, and its name is typical of the playful side of modern management. It is a pun on the Greek playwright Sophocles, whose most famous tragedy Oedipus does indeed offer a good example: having caused much havoc, Oedipus cuts out his eyes.

The language of management reveals time and again how reality can be reversed. A good example is found in an article in *HO Management* (6-11), where Ellen van der Ende, secretary of the Educational Conflicts Foundation writes: 'In practice there are many and a growing number of beautiful examples contributing to fetching in and keeping young talent. Introduction programs, coaching and mentoring, tenure track. Best practices show how talent policy at universities is moving.' Her language may be difficult to follow but is exactly what the readers of this management journal want to hear.

In practice the career of a young scientist or scholar is completely different. They usually start as AIO (Assistant-in-training) and write their dissertation. After this first step, they are expected to earn their own funding, from the NWO or elsewhere, to finance their own salary and that of two or three new AIO's, often as a contractual obligation. All these NWO grants are for a limited period so they do not offer security. At the end of a project the lucky young talent has to show as long a list of publications as possible, and of course only in top journals. After each granted subsidy, getting over the next hurdle becomes more difficult. In fact, each round ends with some 85% of the applicants out of the race. Some young talents have succeeded in keeping this up for as long as fifteen years before they are knocked out and finished. By then they often have difficulty in returning to normal civil society. That is a very different story from the rosy ten-

ure track fairy tale spun by managers, especially because the chance for anyone to get an NWO subsidy becomes more difficult each year. (*Facts and figures*, www.rathenau.nl).

The tenure track system fits into a more general pattern. For a few years now, if a grant is awarded, the recipient is burdened with a detailed specification of the project's required performance. This resembles economic policy in the USSR under Stalin because people are motivated by the fear of punishment to reach the arbitrary expectations of performance. It is one of the many methods used by managers to shackle their researchers and wipe out the possibility of free research. The independence of academic personnel and freedom of research are seen by university management as today's greatest threats.

The introduction of the tenure track was a setback for Dutch scientists but the reality is even worse because a tenure track is actually only for the lucky, obedient few. In general people find themselves in flex work at Dutch universities today. Most teachers and researchers only have a short term contract which, at best, is prolonged up until the point, in general after four years, that Dutch law requires it to be converted into a permanent contract. Universities try to avoid being forced to offer permanent employment at all costs. Sometimes a researcher is rehired after spending a period on social welfare long enough to allow for a fresh temporary contract without permanent obligations. In earlier times this method was widely used in the entertainment industry. The official goal of Dutch universities is to have more than half of the staff hired as temporary flex workers. In practice, this means that only a very small part of the staff has a permanent status because many researchers do not only have a temporary

contract but they also work part-time. Of the staff of the University of Amsterdam, for example, 65% has a part-time appointment.

The replacement of permanent personnel with part-time flex workers is a process that started around 1990 but only began attracting attention recently. The problem even made headlines in *De Volkskrant*: 'Academics becoming flex workers', with the subheading: 'Quality of teaching and research is suffering from temporary contracts, academics warn' (*Volkskrant* 2-9-14). The union of university personnel, VAWO, had sent out this warning. In 1995 some 20% of the personnel had temporary contracts, in 2012 this was up to 40%, or 60% if you include AIO's. The Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) was asked for comment and only expressed enthusiasm about this development. Their explanation is that the new model university aims for the selection of talent and that research has become much more competitive than previously. In the simplistic language of the new managers they added: 'Scientists now must fight with each other to get to the big box of money'. Scientists have become Roman gladiators sent into the arena by their managers who watch them as they scrap and kill each other. The new flex system gives only one certainty: permanent uncertainty about one's work.

The spread of flex work is reflected in the architecture of the university, constantly being built and rebuilt. Teachers are pushed out of their offices and dumped to work on flex spots with only a socket to plug in their private laptop. At the same time the facilities for managers and clerks are being expanded, often into the emptied rooms of teachers. In the big halls filled with flex work sockets, there is no privacy for either teachers or students. Flex work is not only cutting wages but is also cutting down on the amount of work space provid-

ed and other costs. There are no telephones anymore so if a teacher wants to speak with a student it has to be done outside the building with a private mobile phone. The University of Amsterdam, however, has distributed special mobile phones among their staff to use for communication with their students. Only occasionally are professors worried about what is happening to their assistant teachers. In a rare example, Wim Derksen, professor Public Administration at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, fears that all those identical flex work places will lead to identical teachers, all forced to do the same work. They have to spend all their time 'copying the thoughts of their neighbor, or, worse, their boss. And then they will become superficial' (NRC 4-1-14).

Flex work takes various forms, from seasonal labor to employees with zero hours contracts. The common element is lack of job security and no fixed work location. This is now a usual situation of those who work at a Dutch university. The 51 year old André Linnenbank is the academic with the longest running status as a temporary employee in the Netherlands, 25 years and counting. Many others left when their talent did not lead to any secure way of making a living, with the result that much crucial knowledge went down the drain (Volkskrant 2-9-14). By and large, flex workers are silent about their situation. An exception is Marc Davidson, a flex teacher and researcher at University of Amsterdam who dared to send a letter to *De Volkskrant* (16-9-14) and complained that employees are now dependent on grants from NWO or elsewhere: 'Keeping scientific personnel in continuous uncertainty about their future is simply a choice made by the universities.' The distress among the academic flex worker has risen to such a level that Davidson proposes extreme

solutions, like the universities paying afterwards for academic output or hiring teachers who are offering their services as private contractors.

12. Students

Dutch students no longer use the word university. They go to school instead. Today's university is indeed much more like a school than it was ten or twenty years ago. Courses have been streamlined to process students as quickly as possible into those destined to be bachelors or masters. The first year of study is an additional high school class, said Carel Stolker, rector of Leiden University, with its language courses, talks with parents, control of attendance and homework. Weekly tests with strict deadlines keep up the tempo on these new study programs. The Dutch government sees the drop-out student as the greatest plague of higher education. To prevent this, strict selection and limiting access to courses are increasingly seen as useful methods to step up efficiency. Selection of prospective students has become priority, although the methods used are criticized as arbitrary and unreliable. Chasing away weak students in their first year is the next priority. There is no longer any place for late-developers or students who decide to change their study. The Erasmus University Rotterdam adopted the ominous sounding mantra of 'nominal is normal', meaning that students who do not have enough study points in their first year will be expelled. This binding study advice (BSA) is now being introduced across Dutch universities. It seems to be a harsh measure but at the same time less is required from the students these days. Difficult modules are disappearing from the first year curriculums. In *HO Management* the 'nominal is normal' concept is applauded as 'a great leap forward', which makes study a 'richer experience'. The example of this richer experience is a new ceremony for students who pass the exams of

their first year. According to this article, all students 'gave a loud applause to those students who had received the highest grades' (HO Management 11-12).

Students have been quiet during recent years, certainly in comparison with the 1970's. Until recently it was unusual for students to criticize the system. Nonetheless Maartje ter Horst of Utrecht University wrote a letter to *De Volkskrant* (2-11-13) summing up some facts: between 1998 and 2012 the number of students has risen from 160.000 to 245.000, while the number of teachers was reduced with 4.000 fte (one fulltime equivalent is a working week of 38 hours of one person). Meanwhile, the number of managers increased by 18% between 2005 and 2010 and the number of public relations employees has increased even more by 34%. The number of students per teacher has doubled in a few years' time. The university, she writes, is a Potemkin village. Martine Oldhoff, a Theology student at the University of Amsterdam, was equally critical in a letter to *NRC Handelsblad*, calling the current culture at the universities 'a consequence of a society with economy as its first goal' (NRC 16-1-14). Such criticism, both from students and staff, was scarce until recently, even in a special issue of *NRC Handelsblad* about the university as a 'factory of knowledge' (NRC 31-5-14). The growing awareness among students of being sold an inferior product became acute in early 2015 when excessive budgets cuts to the humanities at the University of Amsterdam led to an outburst of protest by students and teachers. They occupied the Maagdenhuis, the seat of the Executive Board, for weeks and organized meetings and discussions. Finally, on the insistence of the university authorities, the riot police ended this peaceful protest by force and arrested several students.

This was seen as an unwise move and the president of the Executive Board, Louise Gunning, was forced to resign. The more optimistic among the protesters were hoping that this is the beginning of a change. Others were afraid that the result would be a more repressive climate. The first steps taken by the university since then are a clear sign of what is in store. It claims that the property damage done amounted to more than 600.000 euro, despite a fact checking report in the *NRC Handelsblad* showing that this cannot be true. Nevertheless the university found extra funds to hire more public relation advisors to repair the reputational damage. For the management of the University of Amsterdam the student protest was a blessing in disguise presenting an argument for an even more oppressive policy.

Meanwhile, students and teachers are both victims of the workloads that have doubled or more in recent times. This is a general trend at all levels of education, from primary school to higher education. Teachers providing post-secondary practical education (MBO, Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs) went on strike in 2014 against their increasing workloads which meant spending more hours teaching classes at the expense of preparation, feedback and supervision (*Volkskrant* 2-3-14). At the universities the number of students admitted into work groups is stretched and the character of such courses is changing. Students now give papers that are usually simple summaries of articles and only receive feedback from other students, while the teacher is busy correcting the papers from the previous session which must be finished before the deadline. Management also seeks to replace human contact with virtual communication and prefab on-line courses with internet examinations. Meanwhile

the universities are making the teachers less accessible to students in their offices. New security devices, introduced by the University of Amsterdam and other universities, only allow teachers to enter their departments with a private code. Even their pigeon holes are made inaccessible for students, preventing contact on paper. All together these are further steps towards the teacherless university, which is the ultimate goal.

The management has found a clever way to prevent students protesting against these changes. Their complaints are steered towards their teachers. After each module students are asked, or even obliged, to evaluate their teachers, digitally and anonymously. The lists of questions are set by the management, not by the teachers, and they often contain leading questions. It is not revealed to students how their evaluations are later used by the management, which is clearly dishonest. The students are not aware that their critical comments are welcomed by the management because they give them a useful tool to put pressure on individual teachers. Even slightly critical comments made by students in their evaluations add up to the potential for dismissing teachers and replacing them with even cheaper flex workers, in a continuing downward spiral.

To play students off against teachers has become a favorite sport of managers. One game is to transform regulations for examinations into increasingly complex criminal codes. It goes like this: teachers are obliged to write guides for courses and modules that must be more extensive each year, describing the rights and duties of both teacher and students in detail from hour to hour, with penalties for non-compliance laid out for both. Besides that, prescribed literature for a course has to be measured by the word, to avoid the universities

having to pay copyright, which often leads to mutilated texts. All these obligations and prescriptions fill hundreds of pages, although nobody notices the excess because such texts are only available in digital form. For examinations, not only do teachers have to prepare questions but an elaborated protocol as well, including the 'right' answers and a matrix for grading. Jan Derksen, a psychologist at the Radboud University, warned against this development (Volkskrant 25-9-14). In his department master theses are 'weighed by a committee which has a book of rules and regulations determining whether the thesis complies.' The regulations show 'an extremely narrow view of what scientific research should be'. Without a statistical analysis of data a thesis is not allowed to pass. By implication theoretical research is forbidden. Students, he writes, have 'as lame lambs to adapt to these regulations decreed from above.' The result: 'The way students are trained in psychology has nothing to do with the education of academics who are able to think autonomously and critically, instead they learn mainly about the application of methodical and statistical tricks'. Matrix grading has also the unwanted, or maybe wanted, effect of channeling very high or low grades into an average result.

The regulations which the managers have developed as a straight-jacket for students and teachers are abstract and juridical, and they are only concerned with procedures and never with content. The result is that students start by studying the regulations instead of their textbooks. For a few years now, an arms race between students and teachers has been going on. Whenever a teacher is caught doing something that deviates from the rules, a student can claim compensation or even a financial reward. In this way students are caught up

in the bureaucratic rigmarole which the universities have become. The modern university does not produce scholars, but bureaucrats. An example is the 'code of conduct' that students at the Amsterdam University College have to obey (Clara van de Wiel, *Folia Magazine* 6-11-13). They are forbidden to criticize the College, let alone to do so publicly. The students are encouraged to denounce each other and secretly inform the dean, who then takes measures against disobedient students. Meanwhile, the administrative personnel are immune from top to bottom. Managers and clerks do not have tenure track appointments, they do not have any obligatory 'output' and they are never evaluated by students. Nevertheless, many complaints about teaching are in fact about the university's management, like squeezing too many students in too small rooms, broken equipment, failings of the ubiquitous Blackboard system, and so on. However, the managers have made scapegoats of the teachers for all those failings. It is high time that students became more aware of the many ways they are manipulated by their universities. Most students only attend university for three to four years, which is too short to notice the ongoing decline in the quality of teaching they pay for, also never realizing that they too are victims of an authoritarian system.

13. Study loans

The most important change in the status of Dutch students took place in 2014: the end of state financial support for students. This system had varied over the past fifty years. In the beginning, only students with parents under a certain income limit were entitled to state support. Later a 'basic grant' was introduced for all students, which was converted into a gift upon successfully finishing their study with a BA or MA title. Today students have to borrow money to pay their tuition fees and other expenditure. Of course, wealthy parents may pay for their children, and students can work part-time to earn an income.

Only a few politicians opposed this change. Carola Schouten, Member of Parliament, voted against the new law and warned that in this way ambition is blocked, the accessibility of higher education is limited, while youngsters are saddled with debts that may take years for them to pay back. Students used the same arguments against the change but Minister of Education Jet Bussemaker brushed them aside. Her best argument was that the measure will save the government one billion Euro. She promised that a part of this money would be spent on 'better quality' education. She even announced the introduction of a new field of study called '21st century skills'. This phrase has become widely used by educational theorists but what they say about these so-called skills is rather vague. They have something to do with ways of living, working, learning and technology but obviously nothing to do with academic knowledge. Minister Bussemaker has expressed her general view that universities are concentrating too much on the transfer of knowledge, and that she

prefers 'personal development' instead (interview, Volkskrant 6-6-2015). Lau Kanen, an education psychologist, criticized this idea (Volkskrant 9-6-15). In fact, many doubt Bussemaker's promises. Even the Raad van State (Council of State) criticized her new act on study loans but she solved this by simply writing some more pages of 'political apple juice', in the words of journalist Marc Chavannes (NRC 27-9-14). With the introduction of study loans, the university is pushed back into the nineteenth century, when only the rich could afford higher education for their sons, warns education specialist Leo Prick (NRC 31-12-13). The government will have an additional advantage in the long run, because persons who are in debt usually keep quiet. The intellectual elite of the future will therefore be forced to accept worsening working conditions, and must resist any impulse to protest.

The development in the Netherlands follows that in America where the total student debt is 1.2 trillion dollars with the average student in debt for 25.000 dollar (Ilse van Heusden, NRC 5-8-13). Those who studied at Harvard paid an annual tuition fee of 30.000 Euro and have built up much greater debts. American students can borrow money at initially low interest rates so the universities have increased their tuition fees each year, as Richard Vedder wrote in *Going broke by degree. Why college costs too much*. His book was published ten years ago and was received with some criticism, nonetheless it was generally agreed that he had pointed out a serious problem. It probably has not been read by Dutch university administrators because this publication is not available in any library in the Netherlands.

American student debt is seen as a bubble, in part because the

only security on such loans is the acquired knowledge which becomes obsolete at a rapid pace after finishing a study. In America many graduates do not find work that matches their level of education. They earn less than expected and have problems paying back their debts. The same problem exists in Britain, where student debts are being sold by the government to private debt collectors. In the Netherlands the average debt for a student is 19.000 Euro and the collective study debt is nearing ten billion Euro. This means that the Dutch debt is already higher per capita than in the United States. At the moment the debt rates are growing by 16% yearly. One in five students is unable to pay off his debt and within a few years former students can expect a knock on the door by a debt collector. In fact, the Dutch government has already taken the first steps in this direction. Young students, often still minors, are confronted by two business companies when they start to study: the universities and the banks. The loans can turn out to be usurious; it would not be the first time in recent history. At the very least this financial product should be accompanied by the obligatory Dutch government warning in financial advertisements: 'Watch out! Borrowing money costs money.'

14. AIO's

Fifteen years ago the Anglo-American style of higher education, including the titles of bachelor and master, was introduced in the Netherlands. It meant the end of a system with three stages: the 'propaedeuse' examination after the first year, the 'kandidaats' examination after the third year, and the 'doctorandus' examination in the sixth or seventh year. The title 'doctorandus' meant 'entitled to write a dissertation' and thus to become a doctor. The introduction of the so-called BAMA system in 1999 had the additional advantage of providing for a budget cut because it shortened most studies by one or more years.

These days, the level of Bachelor is reached after three years of study. Thereafter most students earn the title of Master in one or two years. Those who want to continue their studies become Ph.D. students. The government has established a limited number of grants for Ph.D. students who are selected by the NWO or the universities. In the 1980's a system was introduced in which selected Ph.D. students had a temporary contract as an AIO, Assistant-in-training, that would last four years with the obligation to write a dissertation. The term AIO disappeared in 2004 when a new system of university functions was introduced, but the new official title 'promovendus' has never been accepted into spoken language and AIO remains the commonly used designation. Meanwhile their status has fallen gradually, and at some universities paid AIO's were replaced by Ph.D. students supported with a grant that must be repaid eventually.

An AIO is immediately confronted with the realities of Dutch

universities, often treated simply as disposable scientist. Most of them also have teaching duties, although with their Master titles attained after only four years of study they only have limited knowledge in their field. In spite of that, they have to teach bachelor courses, so undergraduate students are being taught by teachers who have not yet had the chance to show serious proof of their abilities in a dissertation. AIO's also lack teaching experience and many will never acquire enough of that because most of them will have to leave the university after four years. They are replaced by fresh AIO's who then go through the same mill. Teaching AIO's officially spend 60% of their time researching and 40% teaching. They teach courses which are designed and pre-cooked by the thinning number of permanent staff. And even this stripped off system is already being undermined by the new tendency to hire Master students to teach bachelor courses, as is happening at the University of Amsterdam.

AIO's are victims of the system. They have the duty to write a dissertation, which takes much time and energy. Meanwhile they also have the obligation to teach, which also takes much time and energy. Of the four years' time reserved for research only half can actually be used for that purpose, probably even less because their teaching duties take much more time than the management ever admits. To prove on paper that the system works, managers force AIO's to keep a diary giving an account of their activities from hour to hour. It is one of the many ways in which the management saddles researchers and teachers with unwanted and unneeded administrative duties. Of course, AIO's cannot account for the real number of hours spent on teaching and preparation because they would immediately be punished for spending too much time on that part of their job.

That could mean dismissal even before the end of the four year period. Thus AIO's keep fictive diaries and that is their first lesson in academic fraud.

Fewer and fewer Master students continue on as AIO's because the pay is low, the burdens are high and it offers few prospects. There are also fewer places because of governmental budget cuts. The next step is the proposition made by the VSNU to reduce the status of all AIO's to students. That will be a great budget cut, but as a result Dutch students will stay away from continuing as Ph.D students. They will prefer a career outside the dreadful world of academia. This is the conclusion of three AIO's, Victor de Graaf, Cathelijn Waaijer and Susanna Gerritse, representing the Promovendi Netwerk Nederland (PNN), a union of Ph.D.students (NRC 30-8-14). For a few years the best students have been lured away before even finishing their Master's degree, by trade and industry offering higher salaries, better terms of employment and fixed contracts. The universities are left with the second or third choice, and are often forced to look for their AIO's elsewhere, outside of the Netherlands.

15. Commercialization

In 1969, Judicus Verstegen published his novel *De koekoek in de klok*, or ‘The cuckoo in the clock’, set in the Faculty of Geology at the University of Amsterdam. The cuckoo in the clock is a whistleblower who reveals that some professors are paid by an oil company for their services and for the use of the university laboratory. The novel was a roman-à-clef, and the oil company was obviously Shell. Some professors recognized their portraits and went to court. They succeeded in having the book banned, and the whole edition was pulped. Cooperation with a business company was then a taboo at Dutch universities.

Fifty years later the world of science has turned around in this respect. In 2014 the Amsterdam professor Joost Frenken proudly announced in *De Volkskrant* that the chip manufacturer ASML paid for his new laboratory. Of course, his research and findings will serve ASML above all else. Frenken adds: ‘Formerly this was a bit dirty’, to make clear how much progress has been made (29-11-14). This is not the only tie between Dutch universities and ASML, as the president of the Executive Board of the Erasmus University Rotterdam is a member of ASML’s Supervisory Board. Today many representatives of industries are found on the Supervisory Boards of the universities, including, ironically, a former CEO of the Shell oil company.

Now and then a critical voice is heard about this situation. Historian Thomas von der Dunk wrote in *De Volkskrant*: ‘Universities have degenerated into whores of business companies’ (*Volkskrant* 1-7-13). It is the outcome of a process of two decades. Professors at Delft University of Technology are now allowed to spend one day a

week working for their private companies, while still being paid a fulltime salary. It is obviously a slippery slope when professors can earn an additional income as employees of industrial firms. Academic freedom is the first victim because companies will determine what will be published about research they have funded and, more importantly, what will be kept secret. Despite this, the Dutch government and the NWO have made 'public-private co-operation' a priority because it comes with the 'blessing of cross-fertilization'.

The limits of this blessing are already being tested. Two professors of the University of Groningen encouraged the use of a certain brand of mouthwash, which coincidentally had sponsored their research. There were some protests but the case passed without measures being taken. A much more serious affair came to light in 2015 at the VU-University where Professor Chris Meijer had developed a new test to detect cervical cancer. He advised the Dutch government to use this test in countrywide screening but he concealed that he has business interests in companies involved. (NRC 13-6-2015). When this was revealed measures were taken and professor Meijer was removed from his advisory position.

A few months earlier, the weekly *De Groene* published an article on 'enterprising professors' in general and concluded: 'Side jobs lead to conflicting interests'. This is especially true of part-time professors appointed to positions in industrial companies and law firms, but also in governmental institutions. Part-time, sponsored professors of this kind in the field of accountancy have kept silent about the many abuses going on around them in the past years, varying from outright fraud to non-ethical behavior. Such professors should not be taken seriously, writes Jan Bouwens, who is a state paid, full-time professor

of Accountancy (NRC 21-10-14). Recently the government has designated ten top sectors, fields of research which had previously profited from revenues of the huge gas fields in the Netherlands discovered in the 1960's through the so-called FES-funds. As the Dutch gas reserves are nearing their end, from now on these top sectors will continue to be well financed by funds taken away from the budget of the Department of Education, at the expense of universities and other educational institutions. The newly designated top sectors, which include chemicals, health, logistics and horticulture, give priority to economic gains and this process is euphemistically called the 'economization of education'. State Secretary of Education, Sander Dekker, shouted with joy: 'Our great scientists are a reason for foreign companies to have a location in the Netherlands' (Volkskrant 12-11-13). In 2014 these top sectors received an additional 64 million Euro to promote co-operation between universities and private companies but this development has recently received some criticism from scientists. Professor of Sociology Willem Schinkel wrote that the top sector policy mainly benefits already established economic interests that are in less need of support (NRC 7-3-14).

The government created a new advisory body to support this policy, the Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (AWTI) which is presented as a 'strategic board of advice' and its goal is 'maximization of social profit of scientific effort'. High quality now means 'newness, validity and importance'. Research 'without societal interest has no priority', as is explicitly made clear. The final goal is to turn universities into science parks where they are integrated with industrial companies. This is laid down in the governmental policy document 'Wetenschapsvisie 2025' (Science Strategy

2025). In this vision, both companies and society will have more influence on science. In practice it will mean that politics will decide what scientists have to do. Two specific themes are already defined: 'a healthy old age', and 'big data'. To build a bureaucratic framework around this vision, a 'Kenniss Coalitie' (Coalition of Knowledge) was created made up of the universities, the Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research (TNO), employer's organizations, the NWO and the KNAW. It is meant to serve as a 'steering group' that will decide what will be studied in the next ten years. This body will of course also decide what will not be studied and in fact, they have already decided that the humanities will be excluded from research in the future. The policy in the Netherlands is in line with the European science strategy laid down in 'Horizon 2020' and the 'economization of education' is an international development.

The 'science strategy' of the Dutch government caused great worries in the academic world, even among those scientists who will profit the most from it. A devastating critique of the plans of Minister Jet Bussemaker has been published on the website of the KNAW and 69 winners of the Spinoza premie wrote an open letter to express their worry that there will be no more room for free, curiosity driven research (Volkskrant 12-12-14). Professor Bert Meijer stepped down from the Governing Board of the NWO for that reason, an unprecedented act and a clear statement. Hans Clevers, former president of the KNAW, protested against leaving the NWO open to 'steering by many parties' thus giving industry an even greater grip on scientific research. Within this new bureaucracy the Executive Boards of the universities will also tend to have a grip on the NWO, which is an interesting turn of events because the NWO was created to make

research to some extent independent from the universities. Clevers writes: 'You need a counter force, because of the agendas of these parties'. A cryptic formulation, which makes the reader curious to know: which agendas? What parties? But what also bothers Clevers is that the KNAW had only seen a draft text of the 'Nationale Wetenschapsagenda' (Dutch Science Agenda), in which the paragraphs about the NWO were left blank: 'That was already an omen', he says. Here he gives a unique insight into the manners of those in the higher regions of Dutch science and politics.

Meanwhile another new committee, the Adviescommissie Nationale Roadmap Grootchalige Onderzoeksfaciliteiten (National Advisory Committee on the Roadmap for Large Scale Research Facilities), has been launched made up of a group of thirteen 'top scientists'. The president is Emmo Meijer, Corporate Director at a big milk company called FrieslandCampina, president of the Supervisory Board of Utrecht University, part-time professor of Bio-organic Chemistry at Eindhoven Technical University, and he also finds time to be a member of the AWTI. In recent years the Dutch government has created many new institutions and committees to support and legitimate its own policies. This is a detrimental development which has crept into the Dutch political system unnoticed. Of course, each new body is manned by the usual suspects of the inbreeding elite.

The central concept is valorization, a word that has been naively welcomed by the universities. Like many vague neologisms, this is a dangerous word. Nobody knows what it means, and in such cases the definition is in the hands of those in power. Valorization, therefore, is now defined in a purely economic way. It means that the more

profit research brings in, the greater its value and thus the greater its priority. Dissertations at Maastricht University must now include an additional chapter with answers to questions like: 'In which concrete products, services, processes, activities or industries are your research results translated and transformed? What are the marketing possibilities and what are the costs?' (Volkskrant 8-12-14).

In today's university culture everything must be measured, but how should this be done with valorization? Managers have high expectations of SIAMPI (Social Impact Assessment Methods for Research and finding Instruments through the study of Productive Interactions between Science and Society). Meanwhile they are happy with ERiC (Evaluating Research in Context), a project that will determine the valorization agenda for years to come.

Ingrid Robeyns, professor Ethics of Institutions at Utrecht University told *NRC Handelsblad* (29-3-14): 'Science is mainly seen as a tool, look at the official government budget and the questions it asks about the organization of the scientific system: 'do researchers choose the right questions, do the results have a maximum impact on the society?' and: 'Is the current allocation of the budget the optimal amount for reaching a maximal societal output'? The discussion is about things like: how do we create more competition? How can we get more money out of the European Union? They ignore the fundamental role of universities as centers of critical and independent thought'. She ends with a fundamental question: 'What will we lose if we continue the policy in this way?' It is of course a rhetorical question and the answer is: nobody cares.

16. Branding

Dutch universities are spending more and more time, energy and money to present themselves as successful commercial corporations and to do so branding has a high priority. Universities are advertising on a large scale in order to attract more students. An example is an expensive eight page 'Commercial Special' bought by Leiden University in the *NRC Handelsblad* newspaper (9-9-14) with the headline 'After centuries Leiden is still a leader in science'. Dutch universities are spending loads of public money to lure students away from other Dutch universities. Competition is fierce because Holland is such a small country that all universities are within a distance of less than two hours travel of each other. This is yet another perverse incentive in the Dutch system.

For decades universities had independent weekly papers with information for students, news, and articles. These weekly papers were important for the exchange of ideas within the university communities. Since the mid-1990s most of these journals were transformed into glossy magazines published by the public relations office to further the institution's branding strategies. Today only *Folia Magazine* of the University of Amsterdam and *Ad Valvas* of the VU-University have succeeded in keeping their independence. Elsewhere, in Utrecht for instance, university papers have disappeared altogether. Judith Thissen, a historian at Utrecht University, studied the development of the public relations department of Utrecht University. In 1987 the department was instructed to give information which was 'always honest'. Today its instructions are to maintain 'a reputation among stakeholders which corresponds with what the university wants to be'.

Universities have borrowed a lot of their sales techniques from supermarkets. They have broadened their merchandise. They started by creating new kinds of studies in the 1980's with the Faculties of Management Studies. Thirty years later the choice of studies seems infinite, ranging from Evidence Based Education to International Business Communication. Just like supermarkets, universities have opened branch stores; Leiden University in The Hague, Utrecht University in Middelburg and the University of Groningen in Dwingelo. The University of Groningen also established a 'branch campus' in Yantai, China. Although more and more subjects of study could be found on the shelves of these academic shops, recently the customers started to ask for better products. In response, the universities followed the American example and offered newly created 'honors courses'. Most Dutch universities also introduced 'university colleges', advertised as 'small scale and high-quality bachelor studies'. The Utrecht administrator Hans Adriaansen founded the first, the Roosevelt College in Middelburg, announcing that 'The rise of liberal arts colleges is only the beginning' (Volkskrant 20/22-8-14). English is the official language in this college in Middelburg and Dutch students are obliged to speak among each other in that language only, their mother tongue is explicitly forbidden. The tuition fee is higher than normal for these new colleges, with Dutch students paying nearly 3.000 Euro per year and foreign students paying more than 8.000 Euro. Nowadays, these university colleges are shooting up everywhere. Altogether they had 1437 students in 2009 and by 2013 that number had already doubled.

Member of Parliament Jasper van Dijk has expressed doubts about these strategies of diversification: 'The university colleges ad-

mit students with money instead of those with talent; there should be no second-rate education with mass lectures' for other students. Still, this is what the government strives for. Therefore the universities received permission to ask double fees for 'top studies' and so called 'excellentie-trajecten' ('trajectories of excellence' or extended honors courses), both brands invented by the Minister of Education, Jet Bussemaker. In the 1960's the best students were awarded exemptions from the obligation to pay back their study grant, but today good students are punished by the obligation to pay much higher fees for an education at their level. The separation of expensive, good education from relatively cheap, bad education continues steadily.

17. Privatization

In the past twenty years, successive governments have turned many Dutch public services into private for-profit companies or semi-public institutions. The process of privatization was complex, unclear and slow and the extent of the problems involved is only being revealed now. In the case of the universities it has been linked with the commercialization of scientific research in general. In the early 1990's then rector magnificus of the Erasmus University Rotterdam Alexander Rinnooy Kan was already promoting the idea of the university as a business. Budget cuts have spurred these developments further as universities tried to be cost-effective. In 2010 Ries Dullaert sketched out the picture: 'Universities suffer in silence. The University of Amsterdam has economized on cleaning, library openings hours, there is a freeze on the recruitment of staff, small and expensive studies are discontinued, video-courses are introduced. The only division which has expanded in the organization is the public relations department' (Trouw 2-7-10).

Three years later, Matthias van Rossum, a historian at the VU-University, showed the extent to which this 'commercial policy' was failing (NRC 18-5-13). He lists problems related to services being centralized, contracted out or digitized; often followed by firing half of the staff, large building projects, introduction of flex work, loss of capital invested in collapsed Icelandic banks and hiring expensive outside advisors. These were conscious policies of the VU-University Executive Board, presided over by René Smit, with the support of both the rector magnificus Lex Bouter and the Supervisory Board, presided over by former government minister of agriculture Cees

Veerman. Both of these board presidents Smit and Veerman made their exit shortly after but the policy has remained the same. Lex Bouter also bowed out but was immediately reappointed as professor of Methodology and Integrity and gave an inaugural lecture titled *Perverse prikkels of rotte appels* (Perverse incentives or rotten apples). Many were stupefied by the impudence of his flash appointment and the title of his lecture. An anonymous commenter asked 'How mad can things be?' on the university paper's website. But this is not madness, it is a clear statement on the part of the new managerial elite that consciously seeks to butt against the borders of power and ethics. Overstepping these borders is their way of making a provocative show of might.

At that time the VU-University had found an original way of making money by hosting a reality TV soap about the ER of the VU-University Medical Centre (VUMC) called 'Twenty four hours between life and death'. Hidden cameras recorded ill and injured people in the emergency room for broadcast in this blatant infringement of privacy. After protests the series was cancelled. Van Rossum concluded: the 'disastrous and especially autocratic strategy of the VU-University is symptomatic of the derailing administrative culture of Dutch universities'.

Farming out teaching, the core business of universities, has already started with private agencies providing help for students writing their thesis are sprouting up like mushrooms in recent years. 'Hired thesis writers earn lots of money from desperate students,' wrote *De Volkskrant* some years ago (30-7-11). There are some fifty agencies of this kind officially registered at the Chambers of Commerce. The practice of educational support is already common

at the high school level and it is now being introduced to the higher education level. The university system is going back to the time when students had to hire private tutors to prepare them for examinations.

A great leap forward - or backwards - came with the governmental decision to create equality between public and private institutions. So far there is only one private university, the Nyenrode Business University but there are currently more than thirty private Practical Universities for higher education. Their trade association, the NRTO (Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding), boasts a healthy annual turnover for the sector of 3.4 billion Euro.

Research has also been farmed out. There are several private agencies hired by universities to write proposals for research grants on a no win, no fee basis. When a grant - often several millions Euro - is awarded for research, the agency gets a cut of the money that should go into the project. There are also agencies that train academics how to present their proposals. An acting course with the Pandemonia Science Theater company, for example, can do a lot for a shy scientist who has to give a convincing pitch for a NWO committee.

Mixing private with public in higher education is the official policy of the Dutch government. Public universities are forced to co-operate with 'private parties', a euphemism for business and industrial companies. The result will be that the 'private parties' will not only have the power to decide what will be studied but also what will be published or not published according to their interests. The Dutch government sets a bad example on this matter because when it sponsors research it keeps the results secret. Carl Koopmans, professor of Policy Evaluation at the VU-University, proposed that this

embargo policy should be abolished because it does not belong in a democratic country (Volkskrant 9-12-14). It also contradicts the policy of open access to the results of scientific research, which the government is forcing on the universities and publishers. Mixing public universities with private parties will have the opposite effect on open access anyway because private parties are not charitable institutions and do not like sharing scientific information with others. Even more complications arise in the case of research that leads to direct economic profit or industrial patents. In those cases it is clear that any private and public partners will prevent fully open access at all costs.

With the disappearance of the border between public and private institutions the word corruption has lost its meaning. It was once a clear concept: the abuse of public office for private gain, and indeed Dutch law has a clear definition of corruption. Nonetheless, a grey semi-public zone has developed where such dealings are accepted or even encouraged. Obviously the concept of corruption should be expanded to include the distortion and subversion of the public realm in the service of private interests. There is widespread feeling of an incongruity between what is deemed corruption according to criminal law and what is considered corrupt according to societal norms. An example of this is the general protest that arose against executives at the top of the Dutch state-owned bank ABN/Amro who awarded themselves substantial rises in salary. This bank was bailed out by the government after the crisis of 2008 so these salary hikes were seen as questionable behavior. The same attitudes can be found at the top of Dutch universities. When the president of the Executive Board of Utrecht University, Marjan Oudeman, was asked

in 2015 about her opinion on the rise in bankers' salary she opined that it was more than justified, that, in fact, their salaries should even be higher. This clearly reveals the new mentality at the top management in Dutch academia.

18. Bureaucracy

In the past fifty years Dutch universities suffered a rapid growth of bureaucracy, along with the whole system of education from kindergarten upwards. And this proliferation has not yet reached its limits. Every now and then proposals are launched which cause a multiplication of the existing bureaucracy. For instance, Geert ten Dam, president of the Education Council of the Netherlands (Onderwijsraad) wants an 'obligatory registration of teachers in a law enforced register of teachers' (NRC 3-11-13). In addition, he said all teachers should provide proof every four years that they have attended enough refresher courses. It is easy to see how costly this proposal will be if one considers how many clerks must be hired to implement it as part of some newly created public institution, no doubt with an Executive Board, a Supervisory Board and an expensive office building as well. Developments at universities simply reflect this general tendency for bureaucracy, with the accumulation of the NWO, LOWI, NVAO, QANU, AWTI and other controlling institutions. These developments are not studied because nobody wants to know about the problem of these complicated layers that have built up. One exception is the article by Wibren van der Burg analyzing the 'process of growing bureaucracy and the introduction of many more procedures' at the NWO. He concludes that the 'hidden costs of procedures of control and selection' of academic work are too high. A widely accepted estimate is that more than ten percent of the money meant for funding research is in fact spent on bureaucratic overheads such as these. Perhaps the percentage is even higher but we lack any official numbers needed to be sure.

The growth of bureaucratic institutions surrounding the universities also causes a growth of their internal bureaucracy. Teaching is bound by detailed regulations, this means that course plans have to set out the details and content for every single hour of class time in advance. That is a lot of paperwork for a university with thousands of courses. While the management staff numbers have increased, there have been fewer and fewer teachers to fulfil the steadily growing requirements. Additional employees are hired to help existing staff prepare for NVAO visitations, sometimes staging simulation visitations. The NVAO has obviously stimulated the growing bureaucracy within universities. In the field of research the picture is the same with staff hired specifically to prepare researchers for the ordeals of making applications to the NWO, or the crushing wheels of administration involved in getting European funds. These developments have not been well studied so no one has any idea of costs and benefits, even though this problem has great societal relevance. There is only one study, published nearly a decade ago by a private management research firm Berenschot. It showed that the overhead costs for universities amount to around 25%, and on top of that there is a 10% administration cost for research and teaching, which includes routine tasks like the registration of exam results. It is very well possible that this is an optimistic guess because the study was commissioned by the universities themselves and higher numbers have been mentioned elsewhere. A work group of critical scientists called Universitair Reveil concluded, after some research, that 50% of funding is spent on administration services and only 20% goes to teaching (www.vawo.ruhosting.nl). Still, plans are being prepared that will lead to the further growth of the administrative staff. For

instance there is a proposal, advocated by Professors Ivo Arnold and Gerard Baas of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, to organize admission examinations and interviews for prospective students (HO Management 4-13). It is easy to foresee the enormous administration needed to implement such a plan, not least because there should be a right of appeal and financial claims if an appeal is granted.

The many failures of university management in the Netherlands are in a general sense the result of what is called the New Public Management. According to this doctrine universities have to transform into business companies with products and clients. Scientists and scholars have become a labor force and the managers are given free rein to streamline production. In this comedy the clients (students) are also sold as products. Bureaucracy has been introduced to enhance this illusion by adding an extra layer of supposed quality control. Researcher Jelmer Renema summarized the situation in one short sentence: 'Science is exposed to a carnival mirror of the free market' (NRC 3-5-14). The implementation of New Public Management has caused the near breakdown of semi-public institutions in other sectors, like the once flourishing Dutch housing corporations. Academics are well aware of these problems but any troubling signals have simply been ignored at the top of universities. The only threat which may awaken the 'CEO's' of Dutch universities may be the prospect of being bought out themselves by foreign investment companies, as is now happening with, for instance, the Dutch housing corporations, postal services and public transport.

19. Centralization

The past twenty years have seen a continual merging of schools and institutions for higher education, with several educational giants created since dozens of institutions were thrown together. This process has caused a succession of reorganizations and the dismissal of experienced teachers. Although there was a lot of opposition, it carried on regardless. Several cases have shown how things have gone wrong, such as the collapse of Amarantis which was formed by the merger of some sixty schools for secondary education all over the country. Mismanagement also caused the collapse of BOOR, an amalgamation of more than 80 secondary schools in Rotterdam, in 2013. This led to the resignation of the director and the whole Supervisory Board as well as an inquiry commission into the matter, chaired by Job Cohen, a former mayor of Amsterdam. More recently a merged group of schools in Leiden also collapsed after spending too much money on new buildings, which turned out to be unsuitable for teaching. Again, an investigation into mismanagement is underway.

Against this background of widespread mismanagement of monster schools, plans for merging universities were looked upon with skepticism. However, despite the doubts of teaching staff, the administrators of several universities continued to develop such plans. Many years ago one such plan was developed to merge the universities of Leiden, Delft and Rotterdam (Bastiaan Bommeljé, NRC 6-9-11). The managers wanted to call it the Corbulo University, which shows once again the eagerness of university administrators to associate themselves with Classical Antiquity. In this case the Roman

General Corbulo, who was stationed with a garrison on the Rhine and forced his soldiers to dig a useless canal between Leiden and Rotterdam. A few years later Emperor Nero forced him to commit suicide.

This particular merger was mothballed but other plans are still being prepared. On 29 June 2013 *Het Parool* had as its headline: 'Hidden merger UvA-VU': the revelation of a stealthy merger between the science faculties of the two Amsterdam universities. They had already reached the stage of an officially 'intended decision' made by the Executive Boards of both universities. Students and work councils opposed the plan, and wanted to stop this 'run-away train with unknown destination'. The mooted Amsterdam Faculty of Science (AFS) had been destined by the managers to become the new scientific flagship of the city, with a budget of 250 million Euro and 9,000 students. There was also pressure in favor of the merger coming from the government, which is demanding such agreements to boost performance and profile, hoping in this way to attract more money from European Union funds and more industrial investments. Unfortunately, a trial merger of the chemistry faculties the year before had failed completely. The chemistry students of both universities were the victims of this failure and therefore the first to protest, and the plan was rejected by the University Council, a deliberative body of the University of Amsterdam (Clara van de Wiel, *Folia Magazine* 15-1-14). Still, the managers of both universities are probably just waiting to start up the process again.

An indication that mergers are still promoted by those at the top is found in an article by Barend van der Meulen, head of Science System Assessment at the Rathenau Instituut. His view is simple, he

hates the thought that Dutch universities are 'bungling' along with unimpressive rankings on the global Shanghai-listing of 17,000 universities and comparable institutions. Another list that is watched closely by managers is the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE). Such world lists have existed for a mere decade but they have quickly become big business and there are now as many as forty of them. The mania for ranking began in 1959 with two American listings, one published by US News and the other by Forbes, assessing factors like the size and quality of the stadium and campus restaurants. Malcolm Gladwell remarked in 2011 that 'who comes out on top, in any ranking system, is really about who is doing the ranking'. Yet, to Van der Meulen such rankings are very important and he believes that the 'best' universities will attract more of the best students and, just as importantly, the most sponsors and top scientists. Utrecht University is no. 57 in the Shanghai-listing, and that should be much higher, thinks Van der Meulen. He believes that only two Dutch universities can reach the top, because the Netherlands is a small country. Therefore all top research should be pooled together and receive all the money available from the NWO. His two candidates for the Netherlands' top universities are Utrecht University and a merger of the universities of Leiden, Delft and Rotterdam - the latter rehashing the old Corbulo plan. The concentration of NWO funds, writes Van der Meulen, should be used to attract top foreign scientists and research institutions of the KNAW should become part of the two designated top universities (*Volkscrant* 25-8-14).

Not much has been learned from the successive failures of mergers in the academic world. Despite the failure of great plans, centralization is slowly but surely progressing in other ways that are hardly

being noticed. Universities have been spudding out the weeds called smaller fields of study since the 1980's. Margot Mulken, professor of International Business Communication and dean of the Faculty of Humanities of Radboud University in Nijmegen, declared: 'To keep a study alive for two students is no longer possible' (NRC 28-11-14). Her inaugural lecture in 2010 was titled 'The pleasure of a foreign language' but obviously she has changed her mind since then. Universities are enthusiastically trimming such studies. Not only foreign language studies but the study of the Dutch language is also heavily hit by professor Mulken's kind of attitude. Other studies that have been removed or greatly reduced include mathematics and philosophy. Frits Kortlandt, professor of Comparative Linguistics, is not convinced of Mulken's logic. In his view small fields are simply 'pestered away by the university bureaucracy' (NRC 2-12-14). Professors of such studies are forced to cheat their administrators. They teach in secret additional courses that are not officially scheduled and thus illegal, with a constant fear that the managers will discover that they have 'too much time', and will be accordingly punished by additional budget cuts. This is academic resistance rather than academic fraud. According to the new logic, the Faculty of Philosophy at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, was been scheduled to be shut down, even though it is already one of the last remaining faculties of this study at any Dutch university. Good riddance to bad rubbish is today's philosophy at the Erasmus University. After protest the decision was made to keep a small English language philosophy department. Most often a faculty closure is done in such a slow process to prevent public protest. Managers prefer the hop, step and jump method: first they announce a complete stop, after some

protests they agree to a continuation in reduced form and within a few years a silent death will follow.

An interesting case study is the fate of the Arabic language studies at the University of Leiden, not least because it was the first professorial chair of its kind to be established in Europe back in the seventeenth century. For centuries Leiden was a leading center of the study of Arabic language and literature but those times are long gone. A history of the rise and fall of Arabic studies in Leiden was written recently by Richard van Leeuwen and Arnoud Vrolijk. Their book was reviewed in *Times Literary Supplement*, with the disturbing conclusion that Leiden University today has regressed to the situation of the seventeenth century with only one chair in the Arabic language left (Robert Irwin, TLS 21-5-2014). It is a shame to read this in a leading weekly paper for intellectuals all over the world. It seems obvious that neither the administrators of the Leiden University nor their Supervisory Board read it. The importance of the Arabic language and culture in the modern world seems to have escaped them. However, to be fair, the University of Leiden also closed down the study of Hebrew.

Closing down 'small' fields of study is often coupled with introducing new 'broad' fields of study. Ankie Lok, who studied Greek at the University of Groningen, saw several languages merging into a new study of 'European languages'. At the University of Amsterdam, Greek was abolished along with other 'small' languages, and replaced with the new Regional Studies of South-Eastern Europe, in which Turkish, Greek, Croatian and Romanian are all thrown together. These are languages from distinct language families, which cannot be taught together. This detail either escaped the attention of

the management or it is more likely that it was unwanted knowledge (Volkskrant 15-10-14). Brushing aside unwanted knowledge is an important strategy in the way Dutch universities are managed today. The Amsterdam professor Rens Bod foresaw years ago that Portuguese would no longer be taught at any Dutch university because in the eyes of Dutch university administrators this is a 'small' language. Bod also predicted the fall of other languages to the same fate (NRC 3-3-12).

Small science studies are also victims of the process. A VU-University student paper *Campus* (12-12-13), reported on protests that took place against the way their university was strangling its Department of Earth Sciences. It was doing so by scheduling it for a slow death under a new model of financing, even though it is one of the best departments of the university. A planning committee of the VU-University promptly declared the department a 'sick patient'. Angry and sad comments can be found on the *Campus* magazine website, usually posted anonymously, such as: 'the real "sick patients" of the VU-University are the managers and administrators, and they will never be fired.'

Roland Bal, a professor at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, and Willem Halffman of the Radboud University, wrote that creating a Dutch 'top university' will cause extreme inequality (Volkskrant 1-9-14). Such universities will attract celebrity scientists, who will hardly do any teaching. That responsibility will be left to teachers hired on a temporary basis. In the United States the system of higher education with top universities rising above all others mirrors its society riven with extreme inequality. This is also the case in England and France where the super-rich can buy a career for their children.

The Netherlands should stay away from this competition, they say, because Harvard alone has more money to spend than the whole Dutch academic sector together.

The protest of Bal and Halffman may well be interpreted in a different way by the Dutch government, which might propose another solution: a wider merger with the Flemish universities in Leuven, Ghent and Antwerp. The first two are also in the top one hundred of the Shanghai-listing. Such a merger would be profitable because these universities in Belgium attract more and more Dutch students who are escaping the higher study fees in the Netherlands these days. It might be only a matter of time before the Dutch and Belgian governments propose to establish one University of the Low Countries, that should reach the highest tops of all rankings. They would call it something like the Julius Caesar University, after the famous Roman General who conquered the two countries. Fortunately, all previous common projects between these neighboring countries have failed. Even the basic task of establishing a direct hi-speed railway connection between Amsterdam and Brussels with the Fyra project ended up defunct recently and is now under investigation by the Dutch Parliament.

20. Internationalization

Internationalization is a top priority for Dutch universities and therefore English has become the default language. One university after another has adopted a new English name: the Katholieke Universiteit Brabant became Tilburg University, and the Vrije Universiteit became the VU-University. Interestingly, the Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen took the title of Radboud University to commemorate a medieval bishop, even though the name Radboud is more commonly associated with a heathen king of Friesland. The reasons for this general switch to English are simple: only English publications count as research output and only teaching in English attracts foreign students.

The negative effects of the Dutch academic world abandoning its mother tongue are evident. Jean Tillie, professor at the University of Amsterdam, described the effect of this language change and of internationalization in general on sociology (NRC 5-4-14). Sociologists have stopped doing research relevant to the Netherlands because there is little interest in foreign top journals for specifically Dutch themes. They have also stopped publishing in Dutch because that does not count for their track record and therefore has become a waste of time and energy. Incidentally, books, whether in Dutch or English, do not count at all. Fundamental and theoretical questions have disappeared from the research agenda. Dutch sociologists no longer collect their own data because that is too time consuming. Instead they prefer working with existing data bases, or they write articles based on secondary literature. Their perspective has been further limited by the NWO, which only looks at 'top sectors,

productivity, economic profits' when evaluating research for support, while reflection is no longer seen as necessary or even desirable. So, with little incentive for studying Dutch society left, academics are publishing for a broader international readership. This is all the more discouraging since English articles are read by less than five readers on average. Most sociologists agree that contemporary Dutch sociology is alienated from its own society, as was concluded by the Dutch Sociological Society (NRC 18-5-13).

The strict edict to publish and teach in English has an even worse effect on the humanities. In 2014 the 'Manifest tot behoud van het Nederlands' (Manifesto to save the Dutch language) was published by four teachers from the two Amsterdam universities: Lucinda Dirven, Emilie van Opstall, Mieke Koenen and Piet Gerbrandy - one of whom is also a well-known Dutch poet. (Folia Magazine 27-11-14). They emphasized that language is multiform and finely-woven, 'in the humanities language is essential, and the first task of a student is to master a language to perfection'. It is extremely rare for anyone to learn a second language to the level of one's mother tongue. At the same time, more and more Dutch students are failing to master their own language, especially in writing. Studying at an English-only university is extra difficult for such students who have hardly spent enough time to master their mother tongue. A final argument against the exclusive use of English is that most Dutch students will go on to find jobs in the Netherlands, and will mostly communicate in Dutch for the rest of their lives. Within a year an amplified version of the manifesto was published signed by more professors, and probably equally ineffective (NRC Handelsblad 28 June 2015).

Speaking several languages has been a cultural, political and

economic advantage used by the Dutch for centuries. Until around 1980, the Dutch high school included English, German and French, while at the selective Gymnasium schools Latin and Greek were also taught, often along with Hebrew and Russian on a voluntary basis. Today, German and French have virtually disappeared while, in contrast, some schools offer to teach the whole curriculum in English. The Flemish rector Luc Soete of Maastricht University is proud that he took a first step towards becoming an English-only university. He encourages the Dutch language universities in Belgium of Ghent, Leuven and Antwerp to follow his example (Times Higher Education 7-6-15). Ironically, in 1930 the University of Ghent was the first university in Belgium that was allowed to replace the official French language with Dutch.

The rapid abandonment of Dutch language in higher education is an expression of a growing disregard for the mother tongue in society. This is remarkable because the Dutch language is still important within the world system of languages. It is ranked fortieth in the world based on the number of native speakers but it is also a language which is spoken as a second language relatively often and thus a useful link in the system. Nonetheless, the Netherlands is abandoning its own language and with it much of its culture. Several examples of this can be given. The government decided to close the Institut Neerlandais, the Dutch cultural institute in Paris. The Dutch Language Union, a Dutch-Belgian governmental organization meant to stimulate education and the use of the Dutch language, decided to stop financing courses in other countries (Volkskrant 9-6-15). Many have critiqued the government's policy. Arie Gelderblom, Alice van Kalsbeek and Arthur Verbiest wrote that the abolishment

of teaching Dutch language is especially damaging in Indonesia. Historians, lawyers and many others there need to read Dutch as this was the official language when it was a colony (Volkskrant 12-6-15). The Dutch policy with regard to its own language is close to cultural suicide. It is strange to think that today there are in fact more students in Germany studying Dutch language and literature than there are in the Netherlands. In the near future Dutch students may prefer to study their own language in Germany.

Will the 'English turn' actually attract foreign students from all over the world? Most teachers are still Dutch and if they are expected to give courses in English they will inevitably suffer from a handicap. No wonder that attracting foreign teachers is now a widespread policy of the universities. At the moment one in three teachers is a foreigner (Volkskrant 15-8-14). Between 2007 and 2013 around 3.000 candidates from outside the Netherlands were appointed as teachers, although they are usually still non-native English speakers. The Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) is enthusiastic about this influx: This is the way to establish 'research of international top quality'. Educating thousands of foreign BA, MA and Ph.D. students costs the Dutch state a considerable amount of money. According to the VSNU website it is a good investment. It will even be profitable for the Dutch state if a number of them settle down and pay Dutch taxes for the rest of their life. This passage is a strange mix of wild guesses, wishful thinking and dubious futurology.

A driving force towards internationalization, including adopting English as the official language, is the European Union. There is a strong incentive from grants of millions of Euros for projects that

involve many EU countries cooperating and using the lingua franca. The Dutch government set a target to haul in European grants worth a total of more than a billion Euro (Volkskrant 12-11-13). The European Research Council spends 7,5 billion Euro yearly and the Netherlands contribute 5% to this pot but they are hoping for a high return.

Internationalization is actually Americanization in practice. American universities are the leading lights for the Dutch government and university administrators. To begin with, the titles Bachelor and Master were introduced when 29 European countries signed the Bologna agreement of 1999 to create a unified higher education system in Europe that followed the Anglo-American model. The 'Bologna process' straightens out differences between universities all over the continent. Many see this process as a breakdown of the traditional systems of higher education, especially in France and Germany.

While America is the great example, the discussions there about the problems of its higher education are ignored here. It is hardly known that American state universities are suffering severe budget cuts. The University of California, for instance, is receiving little more than ten percent of its funding for teaching from the state. Even at its famous school in Berkeley, they struggle to keep their star professors who are tempted away by high salaries that the university cannot afford to match. In America one book after another is published about the derailment of higher education. William Deresiewicz's *Excellent sheep*, for instance, shows that higher education is in a double hold. The study fees in America are currently eleven times higher than they were in 1978, while over the same period a Master's title has

lost much of its value because it gives fewer opportunities to find a job and the acquired knowledge becomes obsolete more quickly at a time of rapid technological change. This is only the beginning of things to come. Henry A. Giroux has warned against ‘the authoritarian forces circling over the university, waiting for the resistance to stop and for the light to go out’.

In England the situation is the same so it is worth considering some of their problems to get an idea of where Dutch universities might be headed. The academic world there is ruled by Computerised Business Systems (CBS). Such systems are using monitoring software to micro-manage individual employees. All staff members are centrally measured according to ‘Key Performance Indicators’ on a system operated by just a dozen or so managers and computer technicians. A deep gap has opened up between a small elite and an army of university workers obeying strict rules. Switching on the system has led to independent thinking switching off, as Simon Head shows in *Mindless. Why smarter machines are making dumber humans*.

In England the bureaucracy of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), which finances higher education, has caused an ‘insanely regulated world of twenty-first-century British academe’, as Jonathan Bate wrote (TLS 10-1-14). In *The Independent Review* (Summer 2012) Aviezer Tucker published an article titled ‘Bully U’ about central planning in English higher education. Using some good arguments, he compared the English university administrators with apparatchiks in the former Soviet-Union, concluding that ‘The centrally managed university is a parody of a university, a Potemkin village that has the facade of a university. Instead of teaching, it has cheating; instead of Socratic dialogues, it has bul-

let points; instead of a community of scholars united by a search for truth, it has atomized individuals suspicious of each other and informers for the manager; instead of intellectual and spiritual life in truth, academic life is devoted to the implementation of absurd, senseless, immoral, and harmful policies that percolate down through an anonymous, unaccountable, bureaucratic hierarchy’.

Marina Warner, formerly a professor at the University of Essex, sketched the situation in the *London Review of Books* (11-9-14). She describes the English academic world being ruled by the stars of the Research Excellence Framework, the central institution which controls individual teachers across the country. Those academics who are awarded four stars by this body are ‘world-leading’, those awarded one star are ‘recognised nationally’, while those unfortunates without a star at all are ‘below the standard’ and can expect a dismissal. This system is based on counting publications, a more and more criticized system. However, Marina Warner signaled there has been a turn for the worse. At the last staff meeting she attended, the management had a new slogan: teaching. Since students bring in more profit than publications the university had decided to invest in a new business school. In a short time the University of Essex was transformed from a non-profit institution into a for-profit business. This development is good for the administrators but bad for teachers who, as she writes, are ground down by ‘inflexible timetables, overflowing workloads, overcrowded classes’. In a later article (19-3-15) Marina Warner re-emphasized her case, mentioning the Netherlands as an example of a country where the situation is equally bad.

The type of university ominously sketched out by Marina Warner

is the ideal which the Dutch government and its university administrators are also trying to establish, indeed the switch of focus from research and publications to teaching has started silently in the Netherlands. This is a transformation that involves internationalization, commercialization, and privatization enhancing each other. Another big step in this process in this direction will be the establishment of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) currently being negotiated between the European Union and the United States. This consequence of the free market - that is, freedom for business enterprises - will open up new markets in Europe for American universities. They have already started establishing branches, like New York University in Berlin. Such prestigious American universities could easily undercut local universities, as is especially feared in Germany. The agreement will also give American universities the right to start law suits in trade courts against European states to prevent public funding of their universities, which according to free market rules would be considered a distortion of competition. This would mean a radical breach in Dutch government policy in this respect because the efforts of foreign universities, especially American ones, to establish branches here in the past have been prevented to defend the country's own state universities. In 2015, at the last moment, Dutch universities have realized the impending danger and protested. The VSNU has signed a declaration of the European Universities Association (EUA) against supranational interventions in higher education (www.scienceguide.nl). Nonetheless, the Dutch support for this protest seems to be lukewarm. In secret Dutch universities want to expand worldwide and TTIP may help with that, maybe they have even ambitions of

their own to conquer a part of the American market by providing their own cheaper studies.

21. Digitization

The digital revolution has caused euphoria among university administrators, 'it has opened unknown worlds for developing and spreading knowledge', wrote Tamara Wanker in the monthly *HO Management* (9-11). She is especially enthusiastic about the iTunes U app which provides a platform where 'more than 500.000 lectures, books and videos can be downloaded'. The computer is indeed changing education rapidly, just as it is changing daily life in general. Digital has become the magic word in education. Peter van Lieshout, member of the Scientific Council for Government Policy, professor at Utrecht University and president of the QANU, has discovered a link between digitization, education and economy. He writes that its 'strategic importance' should be greater. In the twentieth century education was about emancipation but according to him it will be 'a part of the economic process' in the twenty-first century. He has found this brave new world in South-Korea which is ranked first in the world for education, in terms of its PISA scores that measure the level of children at the age of fifteen. 'All text books are abolished there and they only develop iPad courses to transfer knowledge to children' (Volkskrant 5-11-13). Dutch managers and administrators still believe that 'today's generation of students are digital natives who absorb knowledge double-quick' (Ali and Duisterwinkel, *HO Management* 9-13). These so-called 'digital natives' are the generation which grew up with Internet and they are supposed to have an enormous advantage over their parents, who grew up in the Analogue Age. However, we know now that this claim for a whole generation is unfounded, while the disadvantages are becoming clear, as described by Nicholas

Carr and Manfred Spitzer among others. More recent research confirms that knowledge acquired from e-readers remains superficial and does not sink in like knowledge acquired from reading paper.

Scientific research has profited enormously from the new possibilities of the Digital Age. Meanwhile the humanities have benefited to a lesser degree which contributes to science outstripping those fields of study, especially since the current criteria for research grants favor digital types of research. Also the assessment of research output is purely based on the rules for scientific research, this is better suited to digital work with a strong bias towards short articles written by teams, in a one size fits all model. Some scholars think that the humanities should profit more from digital possibilities. Rens Bod, professor of Digital Humanities at the University of Amsterdam, is an optimist: 'It is clear that there is a future for the humanities, but scholars need to grab their opportunities'. His advice is that deals should be made with private partners. So far this strategy is largely untested, he admits, but 'it is inescapable'. He sees a great step forward in 'digital humanities', although he warns his colleagues not to give away their data to Google and Microsoft: 'These companies only want to co-operate with European universities and libraries, because they can grab a lot there.' Such companies could be wolves in sheep's clothing, he suspects (NRC 3-3-12). The sad truth is that the humanities have lost the battle with the sciences, because they cannot compete with all those wonderful new technologies that will create a heaven on earth. So it seems the 'e' in e-humanities does not stand for electronic but for elimination.

Entering into the digital world has many more consequences for universities than just developing new tools for research and teach-

ing. For instance there is the question of whether books and articles should be published on the Internet with 'open access' for the public. And if so, in which format? And at which stage of writing is it expected to become public? A draft version or a definitive text?

Another discussion involves the sustainability of digital material on the Internet, both of publications and databases. Websites decay quickly if they are not properly maintained. There is already a large graveyard of abandoned scholarly websites although nobody knows the extent of the digital charnel house. The Netherlands offers up several examples, if not more. Jeltje Zijlstra, researcher at the Huygens-ING Institute warns: 'The bosses want money for big data and IT but they are not interested in their maintenance, because what will happen in the future does not interest them' (Volkskrant 4-3-14).

An example of success followed by failure on the web can be found in the case of the Digitale Bibliotheek der Nederlandse Letteren (DBNL), the Digital Library of Dutch Literature which makes Dutch literature available on the Internet. Its website is a great example of free access to literary texts, digitized with great care and edited with scholarly precision. Nonetheless, this acclaimed website became a bone of contention between various institutions, including the KNAW, the ING-Huygens Instituut, the National Library and the Taal-Unie (Dutch Language Union). The conflict was kept internal but still the result was that staff left and the website suffered from neglect. Eminent scholars, among them Joep Leerssen, Marita Mathijssen and Frits van Oostrom, published an open letter against the way the DBNL was strangled (Volkskrant 10-10-13): 'few other countries boast such a comprehensive and well edited, non-commercial on-line presentation of their literary heritage'. In their letter

they appealed to the responsible institutions 'to continue their duty to maintain the DBNL'

Within the universities digitization is a driving force behind the extension of bureaucracy. The internet and email have become mighty tools in the hands of bureaucrats: managers can send orders and enquiries at any moment to a teacher, a faculty or even the whole university staff. Teachers are digital prisoners caught between the continuous stream of emails from their managers and their students, received at any time, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. And there are always deadlines attached, often set for midnight, to keep the teachers awake. Any time a teacher is not able to answer on time, or when the digital Blackboard crashes, a student can file a complaint against that teacher. The managers explicitly invite students to do so. After each course or each lecture, students receive emails requiring that they evaluate their experience by answering questions that are biased against teachers and invite criticism. Then the answers are given anonymously and are a tool or, better yet, a weapon to be used against individual teachers. Of course, the students are not aware of how the management will use such an ephemeral online form; they do not know how detrimental these digital evaluations can be.

The digital world is dominated by a few big companies like Apple, Google, Microsoft, Amazon and Facebook. Rinie van Est and Maurits Kreijveld (Rathenau Instituut) pointed out that such 'platforms' are expanding into other sectors of the economy including banking, agriculture, industry, logistics, energy and medical care (NRC 13-20-14). Education can be added to this list as well. As communication between managers, teachers and students is nearly exclusively online now and virtual teaching is replacing human contact, the influence

of these companies will grow excessively. Richard Katz predicted many years ago that by 2020 the American higher education will be dominated by commercial companies such as Google, Microsoft and Disney. In the Netherlands this will be the same. For instance, Microsoft has a deal in place with all Dutch universities which obligates them to exclusively buy Microsoft products like Word and other software, so they are forbidden to use similar products from other companies (C.J.W. Zwart in NRC 3-1-2015). Also, universities are forbidden to use programs that could be developed by their current day students.

For digital learning, most Dutch universities have a contract with the American company Blackboard which was established in 1997 and today stands as the most important company in this field world-wide, which was achieved with less than 2000 employees. The small Dutch Open University proudly announces on its website that it has a 'strategic alliance' with this American company. Meanwhile, students are regularly complaining about problems with Blackboard and have been pressing their universities to buy new, updated versions (Stefan Wirken, Folia Magazine 24-1-15). This constant need for updates is a symptom of digital addiction. Since 2011 the policy of Dutch universities has been 'cloud first', using cloud-applications as much as possible which is now an official obligation. Dutch universities have recently started to outsource their email service to Google (Volkskrant 28-3-14). And on top of that, universities are putting more and more weight on the G-factor: the number of hits on Google. Dutch education is obviously being hijacked by a few foreign companies manned by a few thousand employees, making money for even fewer persons.

For university administrators, the main attraction of digitization is the number of brilliant ideas for budget cuts brought up by the new technologies. This explains the enthusiasm for the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) which is well suited to a set up stripped of funding. In Silicon Valley a new company called Udacity offers MOOCs which are followed by up to 100.000 students. Why would you hire 500 individual professors to work in 500 different universities, they ask, when one person can do the same job all by himself. Of course, such a MOOC star deserves a huge salary but in the end it still costs much less than the total of 500 professors. Internet learning is replacing the classroom and the managers are already counting their blessings. Anant Agarwal and Diana Laurillard hail this development because they say that the attention span of today's students is only two minutes so traditional 45 minute-long lectures have become useless. They predict that future learning will be done through MOOCs and 'If teachers don't embrace it, there is no way of going anywhere'. They summarize: 'online learning is the Blackboard of the future'. They think that students will be made happier because they can stop learning every two minutes. TU Delft started a MOOC on solar energy in 2013. There were 50.000 participants at first, followed by 3.000 exam takers and eventually the number of those who successfully completed these examinations was not proclaimed.

MOOCs are often made freely available on Internet, but as universities see themselves as commercial companies such giveaways will soon be transformed into online courses that charge a fee for access. In fact, this arrangement already exists. Several Dutch universities have 'self-study courses', in which the only human contact between the teacher and the students takes place during a meet-

ing at the very end after all the classes, and students already pay for such courses through their tuition fees.

The introduction of the MOOC model has enhanced the position of the celebrity professor, who previously connected with the public through television. These professors often stress that scientists should descend from their ivory tower. However, there is a difference between them and academics who are public intellectuals commenting on actual problems and voicing personal opinions. In comparison, the modern celebrity professor merely simplifies existing knowledge. This has become a scholarly field in itself with Bas Haring, for instance, professor of Public Understanding of Science at Leiden University. He encourages colleagues to follow his example, and entertain their public: 'scientists should dance or knit more often' (Volkskrant 10-3-14). Not at home, of course, but on television or on an iPad screen. It is hardly known that the myth of the scholar in the ivory tower is an invention from the 1930's and does not represent reality. In the Netherlands scholars have played a prominent role in public debates since the sixteenth century beginning with Erasmus. Besides, celebrity professors are taking over the role of science journalists. Journalists were a critical link between science and the public in the twentieth century and thus played an important role. Without this filter, celebrity professors will repeat their ideas year in, year out, knowledge frozen in MOOCs. All these developments taken together will soon realize the ultimate management ideal: the teacher-free university.

22. Litigation

Dutch universities have spent the last two or three decades desperately trying to imitate the American model. With so many adaptations to American rules and customs, academic life has become entrapped in overly litigious bureaucracy. At any moment, warring groups and persons within academia - be they managers, teachers, researchers or students - can file complaints or start lawsuits against each other. The risks are high for overburdened teachers who fail to mark exams on time or speak unwelcome words. They can be punished by their superiors or by their students, and quite often they face both at once. In this process a teacher can be robbed of their authority of examination which prevents further teaching and makes dismissal the logical next step. Historian and journalist Bastiaan Bommeljé reminded his readers that in the 1990's the president of the Executive Board of the University of Amsterdam threatened AIO's with 'legal procedures' for protesting their bleak labor conditions (NRC 6-9-11). In another case, the VU-University Ondernemingsraad (Employee's Council) hired lawyers to force their Executive Board to release information about financial deals involving the former Board president René Smit and the former rector magnificus Lex Bouter (Folia Magazine 29-8-14).

An unsuccessful candidate for a university position can file a lawsuit against a university these days. This means that a university lawyer will have the decisive voice on selection committees from now on giving overly prudent advice, so the successful candidate is likely to be the least risky one rather than the best. Such appeal claims are already being made (NRC 4-12-14). In general, more and more

conflicts within academia are brought to court, including appeals against rejections of grant proposals by the NWO or the mediation of peer review disputes. Ben Vermeulen, professor of Constitutional and Administrative Law at VU-University, for instance, started a lawsuit against the NWO, which lasted four years. A new phenomenon in the Netherlands is filing a complaint about a 'slandorous review' in which a negative review of a book can be brought to the attention of the LOWI court through allegations of bias. Nearly every scholar has received a review which contained invectives and fabricated accusations at some time or another. So there is a potential for a torrent of lawsuits which could unintentionally shift the practice of reviewing towards becoming neutral and unchallenging. The case of biologist Pankai Dhonuske is also interesting, he was accused by Utrecht University of manipulating his experimental visual material and tried before the LOWI tribunal. He then took the case to the National Ombudsman who concluded that Dhonuske was not given a fair chance to defend himself (Volkskrant 28.9.15). Utrecht University since announced that it has started an appeal at the VSNU, and the case goes on.

Each year more rules are introduced which create new opportunities to start drawn out lawsuits. In the bureaucratic model of university governance, its autocratic character is hidden by the many built-in possibilities for appeal which create the impression of transparency and justice. It sounds reasonable if students are allowed to protest against receiving low marks, teachers against their yearly assessment and researchers against refusals of their grant proposals. However, such steps in practice only lead to extended procedures that can take years. All these possibilities for appeal, even calling in

an ombudsman, serve only as distractions. By creating many individual ways for pursuing complaints, even stimulating such initiatives, the administration cynically prevents a collective protest movement from taking shape. The word transparency is often used by managers but they actually mean the opposite, as is often the case with their jargon. Meanwhile, the growing influence of law and lawyers is felt everywhere in teaching and research, hampering both.

23. Libraries

In 2015 the Erasmus University Rotterdam proudly announced that 5.000 meters of library shelves had been cleared, the books and journals had been disposed of. The books were pulped and will have a second life as toilet paper. This process is obviously irreversible. The director of the library, Matthijs van Oteghem, declared this to be only the beginning of a total transformation. First of all, in the newly emptied space a magnificent staircase will be build. Window dressing has become a basic element of Dutch university administration rather than keeping collections of knowledge safe and accessible. What will be seen behind the window displays? The library of the future is a row of computers, in fact that is already the library today as books are seen as something of the past. All other universities follow the same policy. In 2013 the librarian of the InHolland Practical University, Ria Paulides, announced that she had decided to throw away all of the 145.000 books in her care. Her aim was a library without books, which could be reached within a year as pulping books does not take much time. Many more examples can be given. Administrators talk about books by the ton these days, which is the measure of paper used in the recycling industry. The general tendency is to build impressive looking libraries without any books. An inspiring example is in Birmingham, the largest new library in Europe which was so costly that once it was finished there was no money left for buying books.

The main argument for pulping books is that everything on paper will be available on the Internet. However, the war on books actually started long before the Digital Age and goes back to the 1960's.

The seminal *Libraries of the future* was published in 1965 by the computer and information technician J.C.R. Licklider. He wrote that he had an aversion to books because they were not interactive. In his view books are conservative elements hampering the development of science by freezing knowledge and this message seeded fertile ground. Books have always been seen as dangerous, albeit for varying reasons. The destruction of books has a history which goes as far back as the invention of writing, and probably will continue until the last book has been pulped. It comes to show how the potential of the computer has tended to only make possible and enhance society's pre-existing wishes.

Since the 1960's many smaller educational institutions in the Netherlands, both public and private, have been closing their libraries. Often the excuse was that it was an inevitable part of the process of fusing institutions. A famous case is the library of the Hageveld Roman-Catholic Seminary in Haarlem. In 1979 its library was closed and most of its 40.000 books were disposed of in garbage containers. Some books were saved from these containers, including many sixteenth and seventeenth century editions and even some by the famous printing family Manuce. Many more library clear outs would follow this example, to the point that the American journal *The Catholic Voice* published a letter with the warning 'Dutch Catholics under scourge of cultural destruction'. But Protestant institutions were also following the same course. In 2012 the library of the Protestant Theological University in Kampen threw away half of its collection that had been as long as ten kilometers of shelf length (Ana van Es, *Volkskrant* 11-5-12).

At the university level, libraries began the process of book de-

struction in the 1970's. In 1976 a State Commission concluded that university libraries should be 'concentrated'. When budgets were cut and departments were closing down at all universities, the executive boards decided to get rid of books which were supposedly no longer needed. Unique collections on geology (60.000 books) and Scandinavian languages (the largest collection found outside that region) were in danger (*Folia Civitatis*, 12-3-83; 16-4-83). Such books were often disposed of silently. In 2001 students could freely take away books from containers outside the library of the Faculty of Social Studies of the University of Amsterdam (*Folia* 31-8-01). The scholar and journalist Boudewijn Büch wrote a series of articles about this reckless dumping of books. It is high time that book historians start researching this interesting process. Rumors have it that the library of the University of Amsterdam has a secret contract with a large paper recycling firm. Whether that is true or not, books with library stamps from their library and many others can often be found in second-hand stores.

The dismantling of public libraries in general is widely supported in Dutch politics. In 2015 a Member of Parliament proposed the closure of all public libraries. In his opinion books should be downloaded from the Internet. Minister of Education Bussemaker agreed and she stimulates the public library closures with the argument that everybody today reads e-books (*Trouw* 14-3-15). Even libraries in prisons are suffering this fate. The idea that Google would make all existing books in the world freely accessible for anybody was so attractive that it made scholars in no time addicted to digital texts. Only a few years later the turning point has already arrived, as more and more digital texts are disappearing behind pay portals.

Paper books are no longer needed in the Digital Age, as the argument often goes, with a bow to Google that started scanning as many books as possible some years ago, including those found in Dutch university libraries and the National Library in The Hague. This is a praiseworthy project, although once scanned the books can be damaged, not only that but once they are scanned they often become unavailable in anything but the digital version, which is only in the library owning the paper copy. Meanwhile, inter-library loans of e-books are made impossible. For the moment, this is not a great situation for readers so one might ask: to what end is all of this happening? Do the directors of these libraries indeed believe that Google is really doing this for the benefit of all mankind? Did they ever think about possible consequences of their policy? Nothing about the actual deals made with Google is brought out in the open. Like the scanning itself, it is all happening behind closed doors.

For library directors the main attraction of digitizing books is that it opens new possibilities for budget cuts: there is no more need for staff to bring books from the shelves to the reading room and the books can be stored in cheap warehouses instead, 'off shore' in the language of modern librarians. Even though only a fraction of the books in Dutch libraries has been digitized, reading room service has been much reduced in all libraries. Unfortunately, much of the digitization thus far has depended on Google whose way of scanning is characterized as quick and dirty, without checks or corrections (Karel Berkhout in *NRC Handelsblad* 10-9-11).

Dutch university libraries and the National Library are working together on a master plan. The idea is that one paper copy of each book is sufficient for the whole of the Netherlands. Thus everywhere

libraries are busy 'deselecting' their collections. Some of the deselected books are sold in bulk to antiquarians but many more are just sent to the paper mill. As this is happening secretly it is difficult to assess the scale of the operation. Library catalogues are no longer on paper either, they are only digital and these changes in catalogues are no longer traceable. Former librarians were driven by their love of books, today they are driven by their love of getting rid of books. To counterbalance this development in the eyes of the public, university libraries have upgraded their old and rare book departments into facades that hide empty houses. Arianne Baggerman, professor of Book History at the University of Amsterdam, warned in her inaugural lecture against the dark side of digitizing the paper heritage of the Netherlands. Fittingly, it was also the last inaugural lecture at this university to appear in print.

A sad example of the support for this policy in the Dutch government is the destruction of the Royal Tropical Institute (Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, KIT) and its library. This eminent institution in Amsterdam had a great library with collections acquired over the course of 250 years. The institute was closed in 2014 and the books were scheduled to be sold or sent to the paper mill (Pieter van Os, *Volkskrant* 19-12-13). A professor in Latin-American Studies at the University of Amsterdam, Michiel Baud, had proposed that the university library should at least take ten thousand important books he had personally selected from the KIT collection (*Folia Magazine* 20-11-13) but his administrators declared that the books were unwanted and did not allow it. Michiel Baud commented: 'At universities the idea increasingly seems to be that books are no longer necessary and only cost money, which is a very detrimental develop-

ment'. In the end, thanks to a private initiative, a large part of the collection was shipped to a new library in Alexandria, Egypt. More importantly, the whole system and organization of this organically grown collection has now disappeared. In the end the books that remained were left on the shelves and could be picked up for free by those who were interested. On a cold day in 2014 a long, sad queue waited with bags to legally plunder the remains of what once was a grandiose library. Conveniently this also meant that an important part of the Dutch colonial history was erased. The destruction of the KIT is clearly a case of modern vandalism. In the western world, cultural heritage can be legally destroyed with arguments borrowed from neo-liberalism. At the same time similar acts elsewhere in the world based on religious arguments are condemned as acts of barbarism.

The war on books is fought on several fronts within Dutch universities. Newly built working places, for instance, intentionally leave no room for books. Teachers are only allowed to have a scant number of paper books in their rooms. The limit is strictly defined, for instance at the VU-University professors were allowed three meters, which was still more than ordinary teachers. However, more recently books have become completely forbidden at the VU-University. These ideas about books pretend to be based on economic insight, but in fact they are an expression of a wide-spread hatred towards intellectuals. This attitude is encouraged by leading politicians in the Netherlands. It will only be a matter of time before the ultimate goal is reached: the book-free university.

24. Criticism

Critical observations about the current state of Dutch universities are usually made, if at all, by retired professors. Only then do they find the time and courage to publish them. It is very unusual to hear critical comments from the current leading persons in the academic world, those who have built up the system over the past years. Former presidents of the KNAW Hans Clevers and Robbert Dijkgraaf complained about the new Dutch National Research Agenda, and budget cuts threatening the Max-Planck-Instituut for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen: 'Can this still be called science policy?', the latter exclaimed (NRC 25-6-13). Another example is Alexander Rinnooy Kan, who wrote a critical article about the new 'top sector policy', which he feared would reduce possibilities for fundamental research: 'Gone is the success of Dutch science'. He opposed the basic principle of the newly created Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (AWTI) advocating the 'maximal societal profit of scientific effort', while research will have 'no priority without social needs'. He spoke of 'escalating stinginess' (NRC 27-5-14) but since his appointment as president of the prestigious 'Nationale Wetenschaps Agenda' no more critical comments such as these have been heard from him.

Looking further back in time, it becomes clear that many current criticisms of the academic system are not new. As far back as in 1966, professor C.A. van Peursen published the brochure, *De toekomst van de universiteit* (The future of the university) in which he pointed out 'several problems. He feared that the university 'would slowly be incorporated into the sphere of financial and organisa-

tional influence of world-wide industries, like the pharmaceuticals and recreation industries.' He saw universities losing their coherence and feared the best word to describe them in the future might be multiversities, 'buildings connected only by a central heating system'. Should the 'illusion of the old university' be abandoned and replaced by a 'purely organisational clustering of various training schools', he asked. Van Peursen opposed this development and called for better management: 'Management of science must be the battle cry'. Yesterday's dreams often become today's nightmares.

In 1971, a collection of essays on the future of Dutch universities by Ton Regtien and others was published. In his preface the rector magnificus of the University of Groningen, J.Th. Snijders, foresaw great changes that came to pass including the 'reduction and standardization of teaching, centralised planning and a national research policy'. He predicted: 'The university of 1985 will be a very different world from the university of 1970'. Professor Snijders worried that universities 'were in the grip of a feeling of paralysis and powerlessness, and were only waiting for a looming catastrophe'. Rather than prevent that from happening he observed they were being transformed into a 'centralist, bureaucratic and amputated model'. The forewarnings of the various essayists in this collection are familiar to the modern reader: commerce and industry will strengthen their 'grip on science as a means of production', the 'separation of teaching and research', the worsening legal status of the 'throw-away academic', 'loss of democracy', more political control of academia and the empowerment of a 'financial-economic hierarchical system of control' within universities while researchers will be hired on 'temporary working contracts'. In general, they painted a picture of

a precarious future for the universities. One of the conclusions was that 'knowledge is merchandise, and it will be bought by the wealthiest buyers' and it is very interesting to note their warning that the 'personal links of those at the top will become a great danger'.

Fifteen years later, in 1985, many of these predictions had indeed become realities. This is illustrated by the reactions to the significant budget cuts that were imposed a year later in 1986 by Minister of Education, Wim Deetman. He had given his austerity plan a misleading name: *Groei en Krimp* (Growing and Shrinking). Among many other departments at Dutch universities, the Department of Societal History (*Maatschappijgeschiedenis*), which had been established a mere five years before at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, was scheduled for closure. Dean Willem Frijhoff opposed the plan and said in *Quod Novum*, the Erasmus University Rotterdam weekly, that he was in the dark about the minister's policy: 'There should be a rationale behind their plans. Deetman and his Director-General Roel in 't Veld have been advised. I would like to know who these advisors are and what these people want' (1-10-86).

That very year, the same Roel in 't Veld was involved in an ignominious affair. As Director-General for Higher Education he had established departments of Business Administration at the universities in Leiden and Rotterdam. Then he wanted to be appointed as professor at a specially created chair, that would be financed by his governmental department. To achieve this he put pressure on both universities, threatening that if they did not agree the chair would go to the University of Utrecht and they would lose the funding. Eventually In 't Veld's scheme came to nothing because the plan was exposed by the Rotterdam professor of Sociology J.A.A. van Doorn

in the *NRC Handelsblad* newspaper (26-5-86). Looking back from the year 2015, this affair foreshadowed later developments at Dutch universities. What was then seen as corruption has since become a normal practice. Roel in 't Veld went on to have a splendid career occupying a whole row of chairs at the Radboud University Nijmegen, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the University of Amsterdam, Utrecht University, the Dutch Open University and the University of the Netherlands Antilles. In 1993 he was appointed Secretary of State for Higher Education and Sciences. Of course this was a political appointment but after ten days he had to step down because it came to light that as a professor he had held unacceptable jobs on the side - even using the university headed paper to further his personal gains (see with omission of these details his personal website: www.roelintveld.nl). Now he is the UNESCO Professor of Governance and Sustainability at Tilburg University. His inaugural lecture in 2014 (tallying up as the ninth of his career) was titled 'Transgovernance' and, hypocritically, it was about the 'emerging concept of knowledge democracy'.

Writer Hans Ree articulated the wide-spread discontent in the mid-1980's in his column for the *NRC Handelsblad*: 'There is a general despondency caused by the hopeless and endless fight with the planners at the Ministry of Education and Sciences. The managers are generally seen as insane, because they come up with masses of contradictory financial rules and methods of assessment. Whether you read an article about nursery schools or the universities, the conclusion is always the same: great satisfaction felt at the Ministerial Department, deep despair among the professionals. It is an evident pattern that the number of public servants in touch with

the public is becoming relatively smaller and smaller. Nurses, teachers, researchers, they fall by the dozens. Meanwhile, managers are growing in number. It is sinister, this growing army of managers who transform others into their own image' (NRC 11-3-1986). Hans Ree was reminded of the classic science fiction film 'Invasion of the body snatchers'. Had he been alive today, he would have seen the scenario he sketched out had become a reality: a barren academic landscape with sprouting strange organisms called QANU, AWTI and LOWI and populated by humanoids teaching courses in Transgovernance.

25. The future

What will Dutch universities look like in a five or ten years from now? How will teaching and research change? The government has set out a road to excellence but where will it lead us? Some of the developments ahead are predictable if everything continues in the way it is going. Publishing the results of research will be less important. Valorization will become the measure for funding, focusing mainly on extracting economic profit from research. Large companies will profit more and more from research financed by public money and also determine the course of scientific research, deciding whether to publish the results of research they fund, so they will also be able to prevent valuable gains of knowledge that are contrary to their interests. Societal valorization will end up more like a reality TV competition in which candidates for what the VSNU calls 'the big prize' will have to fight each other and then the public will be asked to vote for the winner. In any case, all research will be restricted to areas defined by the government and a few large companies. The role of the NWO (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research) will be reduced, meanwhile funding from European Union institutions of the European Union will become more important making economic and political factors decisive.

Centralization and the fusion of universities and faculties will continue. The planned Corbulo University (merging the universities of Leiden, Delft and Rotterdam) may well achieve a higher ranking along with Utrecht University on international listings. Amsterdam will have just one, massive UvA-VU-university. Purges of unprofitable studies and departments will continue. Languages like French,

German or Dutch will only be taught at one university, while courses in general will all be taught in English. The use of English will end up being enforced by the growing number of security officers patrolling the newly built campuses, which will soon show signs of decay. Teachers will be continually replaced, and students will hardly notice the consequent deteriorating level of teaching. Universities will attract fewer and fewer students from within the Netherlands. The gap between students with rich parents and the rest will widen. Student loans will be sold to private debt-collection agencies. The humanities will first be reduced to e-humanities and then abolished eventually or left to the whims of private parties. Foreign universities will establish branches in the country or even take over Dutch universities. The technical universities will continue to steer their own course and profit the most from the policy of the government. University colleges will become more expensive and more exclusive and in general there will be more private universities. Within the universities the gap will continue to widen between on the one hand management and the faculty elite and the teachers and researchers on the other. The small circle of administrators, managers and politicians will cut off all connections they may still have with the practice of teaching and research. A small number of faculty stars will be teaching larger groups of students through MOOCs. The university will be led by a small cadre of managers and representatives of trade and industry along with just a few science professors, all working in harmony. Meanwhile at the lower levels the struggle between academic colleagues will be further encouraged. Working at universities will increasingly be governed by systems of control and punishment. Distrust will be the cornerstone of teaching and research. What is

left of an independent university press will be transformed into muzzled e-weeklies for students and glossy magazines for private partners.

In general, universities will be more and more oppressive towards students and teachers. The first signs of the course being taken were visible after student protests which started in March 2015 in Amsterdam and spread to other universities. Students and staff joined forces to protest against budget cuts, the business-like management and the lack of democracy. A peaceful occupation of the Maagdenhuis was ended by the riot police while students were arrested, imprisoned and spuriously billed for damages. In the beginning there was a hope for an Academic Spring in the Netherlands. Only a few months later both Ewald Engelen and Rob Schouten concluded that this Academic Spring had ended in failure. In hindsight it seems as though it provided authorities an opportunity to round up the last corners of resistance. Minister Jet Bussemaker firmly declared that she would not change anything in her politics because of these protests (Bas Bellemans in *Folia* 2.9.15), and she even ridiculed students who had asked for a degree of democracy (Marc Kolle in *Folia* 9.9.15). The University's ceremonial opening of the academic year in September 2015 had censorship as its theme. Incredibly, students who were officially invited to contribute were forbidden to speak at the last moment, because the authorities feared that they might insult some of the audience. The future has already started.

This sketch of the near future of Dutch universities might be too rosy a picture. In the past even the most somber expectations have turned out to be too optimistic. In 1977 the Scientific Council for Government Policy published a report which looked ahead 25 years

into the future of the Netherlands, *De komende vijftiengintig jaar. Een toekomstverkenning voor Nederland*. In the chapter on education the expectation was that change would be limited to an increase in scale and centralization. The role of new media, Internet and digitalization were not envisioned, nor was the debasement of the educational field as a whole or the influence of neo-liberal ideology. In 2004, looking back over those 25 years, a follow-up report was published, *Vijftiengintig jaar later. De toekomstverkenning van de WRR uit 1977 als leerproces*. The Council concluded it had learnt what it called a ‘tragic lesson’ that ‘precisely in the world of education the belief in “systems” supersedes critical reason.’ That leads the authors to the realization that ‘the projection of 1977 shows again that the road to hell is paved with good intentions.’ Today, in 2015, things are different. The road to hell is now paved with bad intentions, derived from political ideology and spurred by economic gain. Fortunately, if the outcome indeed turns out to be a hell, it will at least be an excellent hell.

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Dutch-English Glossary

Academische Raad (Academic Council)

Adviesraad voor Wetenschap, Technologie en Innovatie (Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation)

Adviesraad voor het Wetenschaps- en Technologiebeleid (Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy)

Assistent-in-opleiding (Assistent-in-Training)

Bindend Studieadvies (Binding Study Advice)

Elektronische Leeromgeving (Electronic Learning)

Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (International Institute of Social history)

Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (Royal Tropical Institute)

Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies)

Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences)

Landelijk Orgaan Wetenschappelijke Integriteit (National Board of Research Integrity) (LOWI)

Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs (Secondary Practical Education) (MBO)

Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies)

Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie (Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders)

Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research)

Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding (Netherlands Council for Training and Education)

Nederlandse Zorgautoriteit (Dutch Healthcare Authority)

Nederlandse Organisatie voor Zuiver Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Netherlands Organization for Pure Scientific Research)

Nederlandse Organisatie voor Toegepast-Natuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research)

Nederlandse Mededingingsautoriteit (Authority for Consumers and Markets)	Economic Council of the Netherlands)
Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding, (Netherlands Council for Training and Education)	Stichting Onderwijsgeschillen (Foundation for Education Conflicts)
Nederlandse Taalunie (Dutch Language Union)	Stichting Sociaal Fonds voor de Kennis Sector (Foundation Social Funds for the Field of Knowledge)
Onderwijsraad (Education Council for the Netherlands)	Trans-Atlantisch Vrijhandels- en Investeringsverdrag (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership)
Onderzoeksraad voor Veiligheid (Dutch Safety Board)	Vereniging van (Samenwerkende Nederlandse) Universiteiten (Association of Universities in the Netherlands)
Promovendi Netwerk Nederland (Netherlands Ph.D. Network)	Wet Universitaire Bestuurshervorming (Act of University Administrative Reform)
Raad voor de Journalistiek (Netherlands Press Council)	Wet Modernisering Universitair Bestuur (Act of Modernisation University Administration)
Raad van Advies voor het Wetenschapsbeleid (Council of Advice for Science Policy)	Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (Scientific Council for Government Policy)
Researchcentrum voor Onderwijs en de Arbeidsmarkt (Research Centre for Education and the Labor Market)	Universiteitsraad (University Council)
Sociaal-Economische Raad (Social and	

English-Dutch Glossary

Academic Council (Academische Raad)	Policy (Raad van Advies voor het Wetenschapsbeleid)
Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie)	Dutch Council for Training and Education (Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding)
Act of Modernisation University Administration (Wet Modernisering Universitair Bestuur)	Dutch Healthcare Authority (Nederlandse Zorgautoriteit)
Act of University Administrative Reform (Wet Universitaire Bestuurshervorming)	Dutch Language Union (Nederlandse Taalunie)
Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (Adviesraad voor Wetenschap, Technologie en Innovatie)	Dutch Safety Board (Onderzoeksraad voor Veiligheid)
Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy (Adviesraad voor het Wetenschaps- en Technologiebeleid)	Electronic Learning (Elektronische Leeromgeving)
Assistant-in-Training (Assistent-in-Opleiding)	Foundation Social Funds for the Field of Knowledge (Stichting Sociaal Fonds voor de Kennis Sector)
Association of Universities in the Netherlands (Vereniging van (Samenwerkende Nederlandse) Universiteiten)	Foundation for Education Conflicts (Stichting Onderwijsgeschillen)
Authority for Consumers and Markets (Nederlandse Mededingingsautoriteit)	Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies (Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie)
Binding Study Advice (Bindend Studieadvies)	International Institute of Social History (Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis)
Council of Advice for Science	National Board of Research Integrity

(Landelijk Orgaan Wetenschappelijke Integriteit)	Onderwijs en de Arbeidsmarkt
Netherlands Council for Training and Education (Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding)	Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde)
Netherlands Ph.D. Network (Promovendi Netwerk Nederland)	Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen)
Netherlands Press Council (Raad voor de Journalistiek)	Royal Tropical Institute (Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen)
Netherlands Organization for Pure Scientific Research (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Zuiver Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek)	Scientific Council for Government Policy (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeeringsbeleid)
Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Toegepast-Natuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek)	Secondary Practical Education (Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs)
Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek)	Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (Sociaal-Economische Raad)
Research Centre for Education and the Labor Market (Researchcentrum voor	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (Trans-Atlantisch Vrijhandels- en Investeringsverdrag)
	University Council (Universiteitsraad)

List of abbreviations

AIO Assistent-in-Opleiding (Assistant-in-Training)	denis
AWT Adviesraad voor het Wetenschaps- en Technologiebeleid (Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy)	ING International Netherlands Group Bank (ING Groep)
AWTI Adviesraad voor Wetenschap, Technologie en Innovatie (Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation)	IISG Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (International Institute of Social History)
BOOR Bestuur Openbaar Onderwijs Rotterdam	KIT Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (Royal Tropical Institute)
BSA Bindend Studieadvies (Binding Study Advice)	KITLV Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies)
CBS Computerized Business Systems	KNAW Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences)
CEO Chief Executive Officer	LOWI Landelijk Orgaan Wetenschappelijke Integriteit (National Board of Research Integrity)
DBNL Digitale Bibliotheek der Nederlandse Letteren	MBO Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs (Post-Secondary Practical Education)
DNB De Nederlandsche Bank (Dutch Central Bank)	MOOC Massive Open Online Course
DSM Royal Dutch State Mines	MUB Wet Modernisering Universitair Bestuur (Act of Modernisation University Administration)
ELO Elektronische Leeromgeving (Electronic Learning)	NIOD Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies)
ERiC Evaluating Research in Context	NMa Nederlandse Mededingingsautoriteit (Authority for Consumers and Markets)
ERC European Research Council	NPM New Public Management
ESF European Science Foundation	NRTO Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding (Dutch Council for Training and Education)
EUA European Universities Association	NS Dutch Railways
EUR Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam	
FES Fonds Economische Structuurversterking (Funds Strengthening the Economic Structure)	
FTE Fulltime Equivalent	
HBP Human Brain Project	
HEFCE Higher Education Funding Council for England	
ING Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschie-	

NSV Nederlandse Sociologische Vereniging (Dutch Sociological Society)

NVAO Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie (Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders)

NWO Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research)

NZa Nederlandse Zorgautoriteit (Dutch Healthcare Authority)

PISA Programme for International Student Assessment

PNN Promovendi Netwerk Nederland

PTT Staatsbedrijf der Posterijen, Telegrafie en Telefonie (Dutch State Postal Office)

PvdA Partij van de Arbeid

QANU Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities

RAWB Raad van Advies voor het Wetenschapsbeleid (Council of Advice for Science Policy)

ROA Researchcentrum voor Onderwijs en de Arbeidsmarkt (Research Centre for Education and the Labor Market)

SIAMPI Social Impact Assessment Methods for Research and finding Instruments through the Study of Productive Interactions between Science and Society

SEP Standard Evaluation Protocol

SER Sociaal-Economische Raad (Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands)

SoFoKleS Stichting Sociaal Fonds voor de Kennis Sector (Foundation Social Funds for the Field of Knowledge)

THE Times Higher Education World University Rankings

TLS Times Literary Supplement

TNO Nederlandse Organisatie voor Toegepast-Natuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research)

TTIP Trans-Atlantisch Vrijhandels- en Investeringsverdrag (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership)

TU Technische Universiteit (Technical University)

UvA Universiteit van Amsterdam (University of Amsterdam)

VAWO Vakbond voor de Wetenschap (Union of University Personnel)

VNO-NCW Verbond van Nederlandse Ondernemers/Nederlands Christelijke Werkgeversbond

VSNU Vereniging van (Samenwerkende Nederlandse) Universiteiten (Association of Universities in the Netherlands)

VUMC VU-University Medical Center

VU-University, formerly Vrije Universiteit (Free University)

WRR Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (Scientific Council for Government Policy)

WUB Wet Universitaire Bestuurs-hervorming (Act of University Administrative Reform)

ZWO Nederlandse Organisatie voor Zuiver Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Netherlands Organization for Pure Scientific Research)

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Dutch universities are striving towards excellence while their administrators dream of top-ranking on international listings. Dutch scholars and scientists, on the other hand, foresee that the growing bureaucracy, commercialization and excessive workloads are leading to an abyss. Are we to believe that today's universities in Holland are comparable to a cookie factory? Are students like shipping containers that should be processed as quickly as possible, as university presidents have declared? In this book Rudolf Dekker links the incidental problems about cheating academics and incompetent administrators, as signaled in the press, with more fundamental processes that have taken place over the last fifty years, including changes in the way universities are structured, managed and financed, the influence of neo-liberal ideas, the effects of digitization, and the development of a new administrative elite in the Netherlands.

Rudolf Dekker is a historian. His most recent books are *Family, Culture and Society in the Diary of Constantijn Huygens Jr*, *Secretary to Stadholder-King William of Orange* (Brill 2013) and *The Diary of Constantijn Huygens Jr* (editor) (Panchaud 2015).

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