

## Images and Trends in Tension: The Alternative Futures of the University

"Images and trends in tension: the alternative futures of the university," in Maria Kelo, ed., *The Future of the University: Translating Lisbon into Practice*. Bonn, Lemmens, 2006, 85, 104.

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The university is undergoing dramatic transformations. These include challenges to the traditional image of the university as organized by a community of scholars as well as trends increasing demands on the university. While there are likely to be some continuities - the category of student, professor, and administrator, for example - the relative roles, governance structures, as well as how, when, where and why students learn and professors teach and research, are likely to be discontinuous.

### Images in Transition:

This chapter maps the pulls, pushes and weights of the futures of the university; examines emerging issues that may disturb or reinforce this map; analyses the tensions academics face in this changing future; articulates macro global scenarios for the futures of the university; and presents meso scenarios with respect to the capacity of universities to respond to the challenges facing them. The chapter concludes with comments on the futures of the academic profession.

I first focus on the pulls of the future, the images of the future. These images define what is important, what is seen as the norm, i.e. the model from which more narrow politics emerge (who gets what, when, and how).

The classical image of the university as organized by a community of scholars has been under challenge for centuries.<sup>2</sup> The modern industrial model with clear lines of division, a clear hierarchy, a growing bureaucracy, and research driven not by knowledge for the sake of knowledge but for national research interests has been in ascendancy for the last one-hundred fifty years or so. However, the industrial vertical structure did not

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on presentations in Luxembourg, Vienna and Penang in 2005 and 2006, organized by ASEM, ACA and University Sains Malaysia respectively. I would like to thank the organizers and participants of these conferences for their comments.

<sup>2</sup> See Philip Spies, "University Traditions and the Challenge of Globalization," in Sohail Inayatullah and Jennifer Gidley, eds., *The University in Transformation: Global Perspectives on the Futures of the University*. Westport, CT, Bergin and Garvey, 2000, 19-30.

destroy the previously dominant classical model. Rather it was included in the latter, leading to two parallel organizational structures within the university. This was especially so in Europe and the USA, wherein academics generally have been left to govern themselves especially with regards to the academic canon. In Asia and Africa, the state has been far more intrusive. The guiding image has not been that of an autonomous academic but of the dissenting professor and student leader challenging dictatorship. To be sure, the university has been a site of tension in the West as well, but in Asia, the modernist development project has clashed head on with the quest for freedom. Order and discipline have been in foundational contradiction to dissent and autonomy.

The industrial and classical images have been challenged also by the drivers (the pushes) of corporatisation/globalisation, virtualisation and sustainability. These have created new understandings and images of what the university can and should be. First, is the university - as a commercial (corporatist)<sup>3</sup> centre – market driven, globally aggressive, in search of the “student-dollar” wherever it may be? Rising up in the Academy is gained largely by the capacity to bring in research dollars, to demonstrate that one is a good entrepreneur. However, this image is directly in tension with the image of the community of scholars. The community is democratic and all voices must be heard; while in the commercial model, it is not egalitarianism that is primary, but reward structures that favour financial knowledge. Courses that are taught must have not only national rationale (helping the economic development of the country) but be globally competitive, raising the competitive advantage of the nation. If the student numbers are not there, then courses are cut: each course must be able to financially justify itself. Humanities courses, and those not directly related to the global knowledge economy, are generally the first to be cut.<sup>4</sup>

There is as well tension between the imagination of the university as an industrial structure and as a site of global innovation. The former is focused on cost saving through obedience and regimentation and the latter demands the capacity to find new products, new niches and is focused on discovery science. The former is funded through state subsidies, that is, carving up tax payer's wealth while the latter survives through creating wealth (and enhancing inequity).

However, the battle between defining images is not just restricted to the commercial versus the industrial versus the classical, but also between these three and the newly emerged virtual university. While the virtual university is run on commercial grounds – courses that bring in new students and dollars - the reach is global and the structure or

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<sup>3</sup> Commercial and corporate have been used interchangeable in this chapter, though one could argue that corporatist is a type of structure within the commercial umbrella. One could be commercial and eschew the vertical corporatist structure as with dot-com enterprises.

<sup>4</sup> See Deane Neubauer, "Will the Future Include Us: Reflections of a Practitioner of Higher Education," in Sohail Inayatullah and Jennifer Gidley, eds., *Op. cit.* pp. 41-54. Also, see Peter Manicas, 'Higher Education on the Brink,' in the same book, pp. 31-40.

organisation that supports this image, this future, is flatter. It is not corporatist *per se*, at least, not yet. The hierarchy of the professor is challenged (and eventually of the administrators as well, but that is still in the distance) and networked organisations and teaching practices result. Global reach changes the nature of the student body (no longer a physical community) and the nature of the professoriate (one can teach from any where and need not be full-time based on the campus, or even in the country of the university). As virtual technology keeps on developing, place and power will continue to diminish. The industrial image will be strained to its limits also by classical notions of the community of scholars. However, the industrial may return via new surveillance technologies. Telecommuting may be allowed if the administration can keep an eye – via web-bots and other new technologies – on academics and students. Further, face to face community may be reinvented in electronic agoras. These may be global and local, inter and trans-disciplinary. The half-life of knowledge also transforms in this image of the university – the classics are less important and “just in time” -knowledge far more important – as knowledge continues to exponentially increase, new knowledge becomes ever more possible, important and indeed defining of purpose.<sup>5</sup> The half-life of the career changes, too, with students and professors regularly changing employment. This means moving from one career to multiple careers or to the “portfolio career”: holding many jobs simultaneously and living in many countries during the academic year. One can be a virtual professor during the evenings and business executive during the day, or research scientist during the day, and virtual professor in the evening.

Those who prefer teaching and learning at night, too, would be liberated from synchronous learning. Also time shifts dramatically in this image of the future. In the classical image, time is shared time, when colleagues and students meet. It is generally slow. In the industrial image of the university, time is regulated and controlled, divided by semesters and seasons. In the colonial and postcolonial state dominated image of the university, time is in tension with community life and the power of administrators and Ministries of Education. Time is used as power, as a way to control others. In the commercial image, time is a commodity, bought and sold.

A more recent imagination of the university is the *world university* or perhaps more accurately *world as university*. For this to occur, we must first have a world, an Earth. This requires knowledge for ensuring that humanity survives the current global crises, i.e. addressing the problem of sustainability. Can humanity move from non-renewable resources to renewable resources? Can humanity move from tribal nation-states to global governance? Can humanity move from a patriarchy-driven culture to gender partnership? Can humanity move from single ways of knowing (generally the victory of the Western way of thinking) to multiple ways of knowing (borrowing from, for example, Indic, Sinic, indigenous and women’s ways of knowing)? Can humanity move

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<sup>5</sup> See Tom Abeles, "Why pay for a college education," in Sohail Inayatullah and Jennifer Gidley, eds., *Op. cit.* pp. 79-90.

from survival to thrival?<sup>6</sup> Answering these questions requires a new mission for the university – one focused on the global problematic and global solutions, one focused on trans-disciplinary approaches to knowledge, and one focused on knowledge cooperation. This new image requires an evolutionary jump in the nature of the university the entire world becoming a university, and its ultimate demise, there being no particularly site for a university, since humanity has created a true democratic knowledge economy. This could be the university's final success.

This image – possible future - is in tension with the image of community of scholars (since this image tends to be parochial); with the industrial image (since the hierarchical and standardised industrial model of production is largely the cause of the current crisis, i.e. flatter knowledge organisations are needed); with the commercial image, since it is not just the bottom line but the triple bottom line – prosperity plus social inclusion plus environmental sustainability – that is required. Indeed, one could argue that the fourth bottom line - that of the spirituality of humanity - is the essential ingredient in moving from survival to thrival. This image (the world-as-university) is also in tension with the virtual image in that while virtual networks are part of the solution, the challenge of the natural world – environmental pollution, global warming, etc. – must be dealt with in the terms of the real (as opposed to virtual) world.

The realisation of this image requires dramatic new partnerships between universities (as for example with Universitas 21<sup>7</sup>) and regional rules for universities (as with the Bologna process in the EU), potentially leading to new global protocols. Ministries of Education at national level are the biggest losers if this image becomes reality: they will lose their power to define curriculum, labour relations, and funding.

A final image of the future of the university is perhaps its deepest past: as a site of dissent against power.<sup>8</sup> This can be feudal power, religious power, bureaucratic power, technological power, or global power. The university has been the site where official power is contested, where alternatives are explored, where that which is not comfortable to Left and Right, tradition and novelty, is challenged. The circulation of truth and power are challenged, ensuring that “power has nowhere to hide.”<sup>9</sup> This image has had more currency in developing nations where state power has been more extreme and intrusive. This is not to say that Western states allow universities to function in neutral power-free zones. Rather, it is hegemonic power, the power to define what is true, real and beautiful, that is more pervasive. The universalising mission

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<sup>6</sup> This term comes out of the work of the Foundation for the Future – particularly see their project, Humanity 3000. [www.futurefoundation.org](http://www.futurefoundation.org)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.u21global.edu.sg/cgi-bin/corp.dll/portal/ep/home.do>. The CEO is Dr. Mukesh Aghi

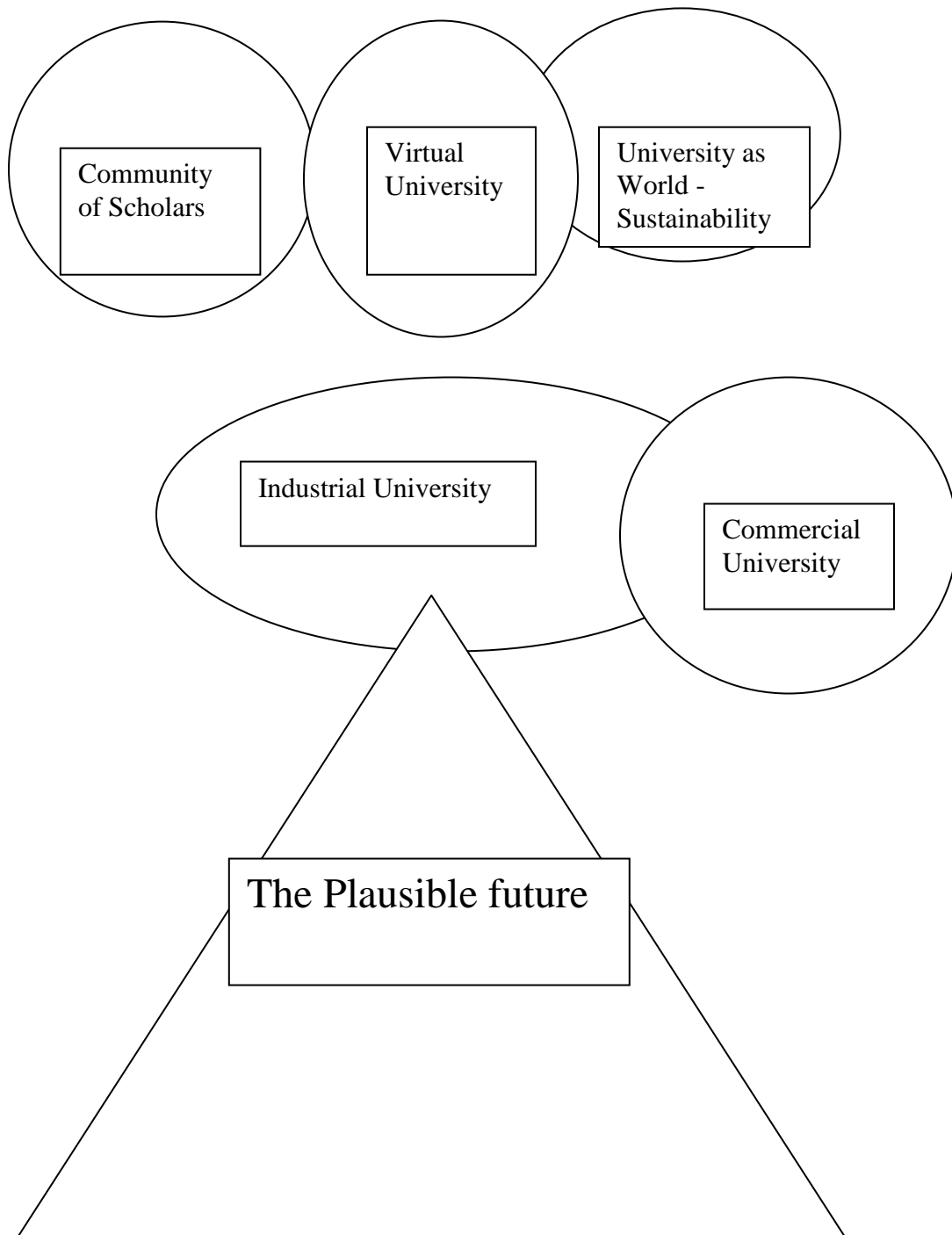
<sup>8</sup> See the works of Ashis Nandy for more on this, e.g. Ashis Nandy, "Recovery of Indigenous Knowledge and Dissenting Futures of the University," in Sohail Inayatullah and Jennifer Gidley, eds., *Op. cit.* pp. 115-124.

<sup>9</sup> See Michael Shapiro, *Reading the Postmodern Polity: Political Theory as Textual Practice*, Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press, 1992

of the Western state and university as expressed in the religious, enlightenment and now in the security (war against terror) discourse has been the vehicle for the oppression of alternatives.

Which of these images will become the dominant, the central image? This question has no easy answer. We know that the image of the university as a community of scholars and the university as industrial national research centre is being dramatically challenged by the commercial/corporate university, the virtual university and the world-as-university (with the current problem of sustainability). Will a *mélange* result? Or will one prove dominant, for example, the commercial? Or will parts of the emergent merge – the commercial with the virtual with the world-as-university - creating a new global organisation of teaching and learning?

**PULLS OF THE FUTURE**



**PUSHES OF THE PRESENT**

**WEIGHT OF THE PAST**

## PUSHES

While these images pull us forward, there are pushes that are equally important. These pushes include:

1. **Globalisation and corporatisation**, in terms of the mobility of capital and labour and quickening time. Corporatisation in higher education includes both the corporate paradigm as a way of organising the university and knowledge, as investment in traditional higher education, and as a political battle over state subsidies for higher education. In the longer term, corporatisation – the commercial university – means multinationals themselves running universities. This will lead to a dramatic blurring of the classic public-private division.

The following trend data is worth noting: (a) By 2010, there will be 100-185 million people qualified for tertiary education. (b) The total market for higher education is US\$ 250 billion globally, with the largest share being that of the US (US\$140 billion). (c) In 1991 there was one for-profit degree granting accredited institution listed on USA stock exchanges and by 1999 there were 40. One of them, the University of Phoenix with 49 400 part time students had a profit of US\$ 64.3 million<sup>10</sup>. (e) In the U.S. corporate funding for the University has increased from US\$ 850 million in 1985 to 4.25 billion less than a decade later. In the last twenty years it has increased by eight times. It is likely that East Asian nations will follow this pattern. So far it is the state that has exclusively engaged in education. However, globalisation is opening up this space in East Asia with foreign and local education. These trends certainly reinforce the image of the university as a site of global commerce.<sup>11</sup>

The implication is that corporatisation will create far more competition than traditional universities have been prepared for.<sup>12</sup> As mentioned above, corporatisation is the entrance of huge multinational players into the educational market.<sup>13</sup> Total spending in education in America was US\$ 800 billion in 2001, estimates The Economist.<sup>14</sup> The

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<sup>10</sup> Net income in 2003 for Apollo Group was 78.4 million. <http://www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/stories/2003/12/15/daily43.html> In 2005 it was 443.73 million. The Apollo group includes multiple universities and has over 300,000 students in 90 campuses in 29 American states. But is the University of Phoenix the future? For more on this see, Is Phoenix the Future: Inside Higher Ed, March 28, 2005. <http://www.insidehighered.com/workplace/2005/03/28/phoenix>

<sup>11</sup> Data from Jayshree K. Odin and Peter T. Manicas, eds., *Globalization and Higher Education*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii, 2004. See "Introduction," xiii-xix. Also see Ronald Perkinson, *World Bank Presentation to the World Education Market*, Lisbon, 2003. see [www.ifc.org](http://www.ifc.org)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.e-learningcentre.co.uk/eclipse/Resources/corpu.htm> for more on corporate universities.

<sup>13</sup> L. Wiseman, "The University President: Academic Leadership in an Era of Fund Raising and Legislative Affairs." In R. Sims and S. Sims (eds.), *Managing Institutions of Higher Education into the Twenty-First Century*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1991.

<sup>14</sup> "Online Education: Lessons of a virtual timetable," *The Economist*, (17 February 2001), 71. [http://www.economist.com/business/displayStory.cfm?Story\\_ID=505047](http://www.economist.com/business/displayStory.cfm?Story_ID=505047)

estimate for 2003 was private capital invested in the US to total 10 billion dollars, just for the virtual higher education market and 11 billion dollars in the private sector serving the corporate market. Jeanne Meister, president of Corporate University Xchange (CUX), expects that by 2010 there will be more corporate universities in the United States than traditional ones. They are challenging and will continue to challenge the academy's monopolisation of accreditation. Globalisation thus provides the structure and the Net the vehicle. Pearson, for example, a large British media group that owns 50 percent of the Economist, is betting its future on it, hoping that it can provide the online material for the annual two million people that will be seeking a degree online.<sup>15</sup> Motorola, Accenture, Cisco and McDonalds as well as News Corporation all seek to become respectable universities. Cisco Networking Academies have trained 135 000 students in 94 countries. Motorola has a new division called Motorola Learning and Certification which resells educational programs. Accenture has purchased a former college campus and spends 6.5 percent of its revenues on educating employees.<sup>16</sup>

Structurally, globalisation is linked to corporatisation, including the casualisation of the work force and the creation of Dean, Inc. – that is a mobile senior managerial class, focused on its own needs, with its own stories (often heroic, dealing with this or that problem, academic or student), its own discourse. This trend, too, favours the university as a site of profit.<sup>17</sup>

2. **Digitalisation/virtualisation** includes both new forms of delivery and learning, and a metaphor for knowledge and the brain. Both are crucial: the external empirical dimension (how courses are taught, where university funding goes to) but also the new lense, the framework that we use to understand the world. As McLuhan argued many years ago, we create tools, and thereafter they create us. This trend pushes us toward the virtual university and the university as world. Indeed, John Chambers, CEO of Cisco systems calls “online education the killer application of the internet”<sup>18</sup>.

3. A third major push or driver is **sustainability as a social movement**, as a new, planetary purpose for the university. The Talloires Declaration<sup>19</sup> and the Lüneburg Declaration<sup>20</sup> - both focused on the responsibility universities have toward solving the global environmental crisis - are directions in this process, as are some United Nations meetings (as with the Kyoto Protocol). This trend pushes us toward the university-as-world, world-as-university. The argument is that the university has a global, indeed, a planetary purpose that is beyond public and private, West and Non-west, state and corporate, and especially beyond the narrow technical concerns of disciplines.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> For an analysis of this trend, particularly the dangers to the academy, see Eyal Press and Jennifer Washburn, "The Kept University", in *The Atlantic Monthly* (March 2000), pp. 39-54. Also at: <http://www.colorado.edu/Sociology/gimenez/papers/keptu.html>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/best/2000/0911/050.html>

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.ulsf.org/programs\\_talloires.html](http://www.ulsf.org/programs_talloires.html)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.lueneburg-declaration.de/downloads/declaration.htm>



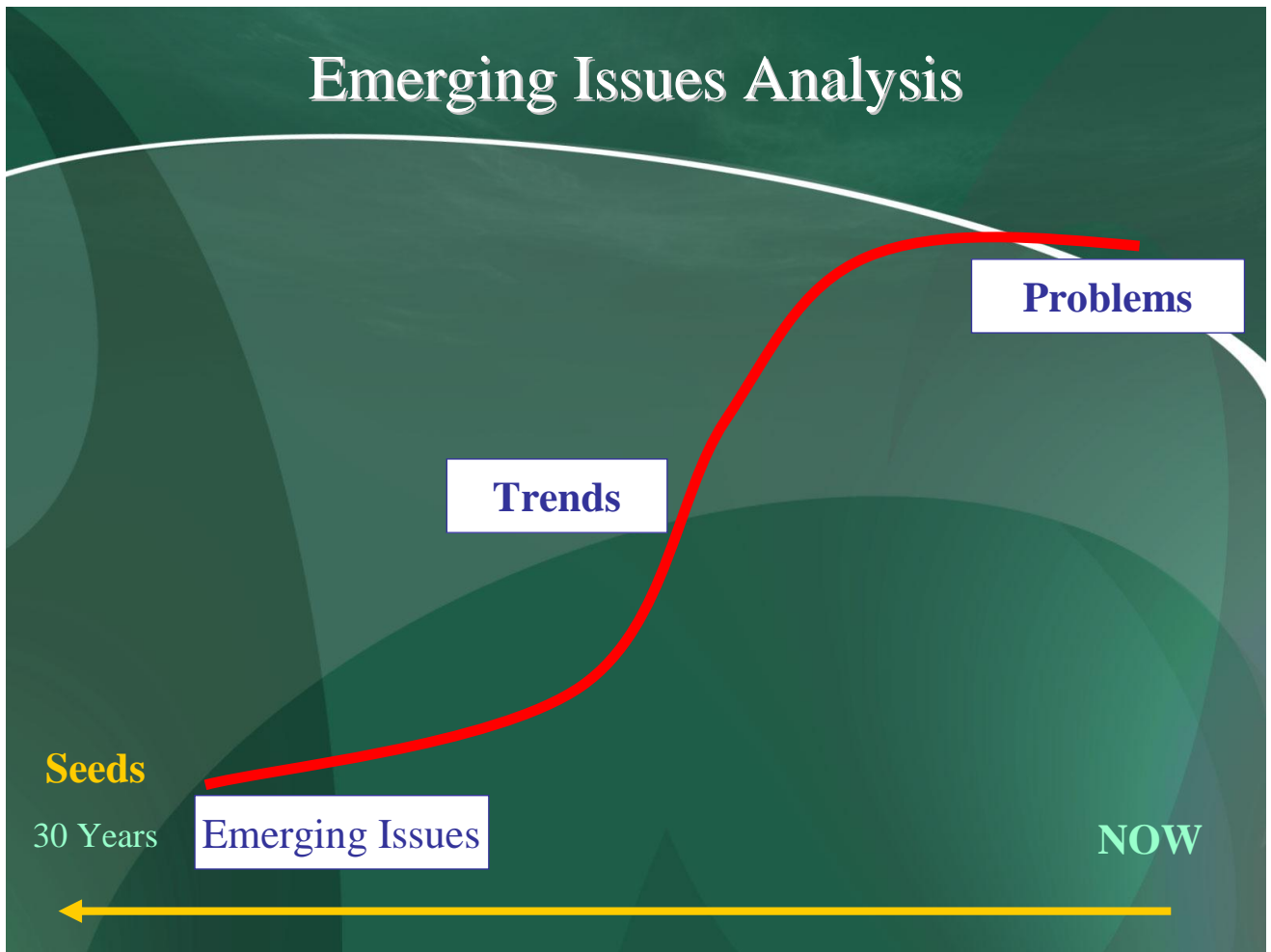
4. **Demographic shifts:** aging population, the rise of new demographic groupings such as the cultural creatives<sup>21</sup> and digital natives, as well as in the longer term a relative shift in European/North American populations favouring Asian and African populations by 2150<sup>22</sup>. One immediate result is that workforce planning, once about predicting student enrolment, is now dramatically changing. The nature of the student (age, values, learning style, and geographic location) has become as important as the demographic nature of the administrative university. Standardisation becomes far more difficult as cohorts segment. Perhaps being adaptive will become a critical success factor? Are we moving toward a new image of the university: the adaptive university that can shift strategy and metaphor toward the appropriate future of the university as external conditions change?

While these are current trends, there are emerging issues just on and beyond the horizon that may also influence the plausible university future.

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<sup>21</sup> See the work of David Ray and Sherry Anderson at [www.culturalcreatives.org](http://www.culturalcreatives.org)

<sup>22</sup> For more on this, see, Sohail Inayatullah, "Waking up to a New Future", *Journal of Futures Studies*. Special Issue edited by Jordi Serra (Vol. 10, No. 2, November 2005), pp. 55-62.



Emerging issues<sup>23</sup> include:

- (1) The truly global student – this is far different from international student semester exchanges – whose learning and degrees are derived from a variety of universities. This may begin in elite universities – cooperative ventures - but could spread globally. This is the Star Alliance model of education (where air points and service are easily transferable).
- (2) Related to this is the truly global professor teaching at multiple campuses and negotiating salary contracts with multiple universities. Loyalty is not to a particular institution, but to knowledge and the image of the university as *world-as-university*. This shift in the site of the professor would require cooperation between universities and ultimately would require dramatic reorganisation. Will this create the Star Professor or professor-as-university with students from

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<sup>23</sup> For more on emerging issues analysis, see Graham Molitor, *The Power to Change the World: The Art of Forecasting*. Potomac, Maryland, Public Policy Forecasting, 2003.

- around the world signing up to his or her virtual and physical courses?<sup>24</sup>
- (3) A third issue is the change in the model of how we think about learning and curriculum. Gaming could be the future framework for the future university. Already, gaming is central to the future of learning: recently Universitas 21 employed as curriculum designer someone with gaming experience.<sup>25</sup>
- (4) More broadly, Clark Aldrich, James Gee, Marc Prensky, Seymour Papert<sup>26</sup> and many others have argued that the designers of video game technologies are blazing the path that instructional technology will eventually follow. They ask us to imagine 3D learning worlds (in stand-alone and multi-student online versions) programmed to identify students' skill levels and learning styles, build accelerated learning paths, bring the students into a "flow" state, and monitor and continuously assess their performance. As video games become ever more advanced and video game development and research programmes make their way into the nation's universities, is this the future vision? What social or market dynamics will enable the positive synthesis of video game technology and education? Certainly this push leads us toward virtuality as the future imagination of the university. We should not make the mistake of imagining this future with current value and knowledge frames. Rather we need to take the views of digital natives seriously.

Writes Prensky:<sup>27</sup>

Digital natives have different expectations, including the following:

- Interaction with editors/authors
- Editing built into what they do, i.e. the text is interpretive and malleable. Wikipedia is a great example of this.
- Connectivity – working with others to create products
- Levels – gaming levels, moving through lower skill sets to higher skill sets
- Form library to search engines, indeed, seeing the library as a search engine
- Global and Local (massive multi-player on-line games), i.e. seeing many intentional communities throughout the world, some totally open and some closed.
- Finally, we should not see the future of gaming and the university from old style games. Rather, new types of games are emerging. These include social impact

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<sup>24</sup> Johan Galtung is a model of this – [www.transcend.org](http://www.transcend.org)

<sup>25</sup> In conversation with Dr. Mukesh Agahi – February 18, 2005 Luxembourg Asia-Europe Foundation

<sup>26</sup> See for work by them at <http://www.muzzylane.com/education/links.php>. Also see Richard Van Eck, "Digital Game-Based Learning: Its not just the digital natives who are restly", in *EDUCAUSE Review*, vol. 41, no. 2 (March/April 2006): pp. 16–30.

<sup>27</sup> See the works of Marc Prensky at [www.marcprensky.com](http://www.marcprensky.com), especially the classic: <http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf>

games, as for example, linked to meditation/biofeedback<sup>28</sup> and games linked to sustainability or other values sets.<sup>29</sup>

(5) Genomics. Advancements in genomics may also change the university. As the model of knowledge and the self moves toward the genetic (nature as the primary force, not nurture) the politics of equity will be crucial. In a world of genetic therapy and genetic enhancement, will genetic modification become the new barrier for entry? Will courses be designed for different genetic aptitudes? As significant, will today's disciplines and faculties change as the genetic (biological) paradigm overhauls the industrial?

(6) Developments in the new science via meditation and learning experiments are equally profound. They suggest that the brain can be altered, new neural pathways created, and old traumas resolved. The brain thus is seen as more malleable than previously thought. IQ can be enhanced via meditation and other soft brain technologies. Will meditation be central to the pedagogy of the university as is currently the state with Gurukul University<sup>30</sup> and the TM University?<sup>31</sup>

The trajectory of these issues is speculative and thus while these issues are likely to dramatically change the nature of the university; we can not reasonably forecast in what direction and to what degree.

#### *MID-LEVEL ANALYSIS – THE DEEP TENSIONS*

In the nearer term, there are dramatic tensions occurring in the university. The first is the challenge of innovation and democracy. The democratisation of the university is not just difficult for administrators but is so also for senior academics. They tend to desire democracy for government but not for the university: the student is there to learn not to exercise deep democracy and the university thus remains feudal. For example, while the economy in East Asian nations has transformed, that is feudalism was destroyed, the feudal mind has not changed. The grand question for East Asian nations is this: how to create a culture of innovation, how to go to the next level of economic development, and - instead of copying – how to create? To create an innovative learning organisation, the culture of fear must be transformed. This means real democracy in details such as the type of seating arrangement in rooms (the round table versus the lecture theatre). It means renegotiating to what extent students can challenge professors. Can junior professors challenge senior academics without fear of reprisal? The argument is that innovation comes from questioning. Questioning is a critical literacy that is central to creating a robust civil society, and, indeed, crucial to attracting international students. It

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.wilddivine.com/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.socialimpactgames.com/>

<sup>30</sup> see [www.gurukul.edu](http://www.gurukul.edu)

<sup>31</sup> For more on this, see [www.tm.org](http://www.tm.org). See James Grant, "Consciousness-based Education: A Future of Higher Education in the New Millennium", in Sohail Inayatullah and Jennifer Gidley, eds., *Op. cit.* pp. 207-220.

is this democratisation of the mind and society that is the current challenge for Asian and African universities.

In British system, too, the university structure is profoundly feudal. A strong distinction is made between the professor and the lecturer. Indeed, the professor is high on top of the pyramid with others way below (and the president of the university residing on the mountain top). However, in the British system, even though the university is feudal, society itself is democratic and dissent is expected.

More democracy in the university means creating a learning organisation wherein academics, students, administrators, and other stakeholders reflect not just on the purpose of the organisation, but how each person can improve its effectiveness. What can be changed? What is not working? But this is only half the story. The other half is integrating emotions into the project of the academy: returning the body and heart to the intellect of the academic.

Merely focusing on learning forgets that much of our life is spent on relationship: with our inner self, with colleagues, with nature and cosmos<sup>32</sup> and with the university itself. As universities change their nature – reducing tenured positions, increasing teaching loads – health becomes an issue. Sick institutions can emerge quite quickly, unless there is a focus on creating ways to learn and heal, and to develop sustainable and transformative relationships.

Democratisation can thus mean creating learning and healing organisations. These can then sustain civil society and begin to create society-as-university; university-as-society, expanding outwards to create the world-as-university.

However, there are antagonistic forces to this. For the Asian academic, for example, the choices as to what he or she has the capacity to do shrink daily. He or she can choose between the following alternatives – the 4 big M's. The first M is the Ministry of Education. Choosing this career means grant research focused only on the Ministry's needs, and it means being dependent on government. When states go wrong, or punish dissent as in Malaysia or Indonesia, or Pakistan and India, losing one's job and a stay in prison are real possibilities. Texts are written with the other nation as the enemy, as in India and Pakistan. The professor must teach these texts or lose his or her position. One Pakistani academic, for example, was jailed for giving a lecture on alternative futures that contested the notion of Pakistan as an eternal state.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Sohail Inayatullah, "The learning and Healing Organization", in *Executive Excellence* (Vol., 19, No. 12 2003-2004,), p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Najam Sethi, editor of the Friday Times. See <http://www.saja.org/sethi.html> for more on his imprisonment.

The second choice is the Mullah, or the cleric. This is funding not from the Corporation or State but from the competing worldview to the modern, the Islamic. In real terms this has meant soft and strong version of Wahibism – the creation of International Islamic Universities with Saudi funds as in Malaysia. Freedom of inquiry can be a problem here as well, as boundaries of inquiry are legislated by the University's charter. Instead of spiritual pluralism what can result is uncritical traditionalism.

If we combine the first two choices we get a combination of religious hierarchy with feudal and national hierarchy, creating very little space for the academic. In the Indian context, this would be the Brahmin who goes to Oxford to study economics, joins the World Bank and returns to Delhi to work with the Ministry of Economic Development. Epistemological pluralism narrows each step of the way.

The third M is "Microsoft": focusing one's career on developing content for the new emerging universities. This is the most rapidly developing area of Net education. The costs for the academic here too are high: it is contract work, often a loss of face to face, of collegial relationships, and of the academy as a moral mission. Volume and speed are likely to become more important than integrity and the inner life.

The final M is McDonaldisation. This is the move to the convenience 7/11 university, the direction where many universities are being forced toward given the realities of the world economy. The basic model is to have large student volume, in and out, with academics having heavy teaching, research, community, administrative and grant writing loads. A professorship can essentially become merely a money gathering expedition, not a position for the creation of new knowledge or mentoring the young.

Leaving these M structures is a possibility, dependent on the nature of the state one lives under. However, the traditional imagination of the university – as a community of colleagues - is not a possibility. For the Asian and African academic, the route in the last 50 years was the escape to the Western university, but with these universities also in trouble, this route seems blocked.

For the Western university, the mid-level problems are, as described earlier, corporatisation leading to causalisation. With causalisation, the lecturer becomes a wage labourer<sup>34</sup>. This challenges the notion of university as community of scholars, diminishes the scholarly mission of the university, and is a significant contribution to the breakdown of traditional civil society, as work-family balance is threatened. That there is a gender dimension to this tells us a great deal about the linkage of globalisation and corporatisation to patriarchy. Finally, dissent becomes problematic as lecturers can be

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<sup>34</sup> As Philip Altbach has noted: "the American university is becoming a kind of caste system, with the tenured Brahmins at the top and lower castes occupying subservient positions." See, Philip Altbach, "An International Academic Crisis? The American Professoriate in Comparative Perspective," in *Daedalus* (127, 4, 1997), p. 332. This is quoted in Michael Slovník, "The Virtual University and the Professoriate," in Sohail Inayatullah and Jennifer Gidley, eds., *Op. cit.* p. 55.

fired if they do not tow the political line. Fortress Europe, America or Australia demands new loyalties from academics: first to the nation and second to freedom of inquiry.

Along with casualisation, another challenge is posed by the organisational corporatisation of the university: it is run as a firm instead of as a guild (though managed by the Ministry of Education). The Vice-Chancellor becomes the CEO, the Deans become vice-presidents, professors become managers (but holding a dual position, still maintaining privilege because of access to secret knowledge) and students become customers. This leads to the end of loyalty. The university demands loyalty but cannot give stability and security, thus the feudal contract becomes emotionally void.

What then should academics in the West do? For the elite academics, the consequences are easy to map out. The professor moves from being located at a university to being a professor at multiple universities (not allowing any university to take over) and then ultimately the professor becomes the university. An alternative trajectory is the creation of an academic cooperative, i.e. group of professors creating their own university. Only national accreditation stops this innovation. And since industrial jobs are still based on accreditation, even as the walls become more porous, the university remains.

For the normal academic, the costs become higher and higher. What results is loss of agency, relative salary deprivation (compared to other professions: in OECD nations even to trades such as plumber and electrician) and over time loss of respect, i.e. the university seen more and more irrelevant to the future. In contrast, it is the media oriented technologist that is seen as where the real action is: new media technology creators (the i-pod, for example), website creators (youtube.com or myspace.com, for example), the content creators, and the marketers and distributors, not the analysts.<sup>35</sup>

### **Possible Future Structures:**

Given the above images, trends, emerging issues and mid-level analysis, there are three possible structures. One is being a University leader, joining the world's elite, such as Harvard, Stanford or Oxford. The focus then is: "We are only going to get the best and brightest students around the world." But the challenge to this model comes from the dotcom world. The big money is unlikely to be in teaching but in content design. The issue though is that once you *en masse* put your name on CD-ROMs and on internet content, does that diminish your brand name and its exclusivity? If everyone can enter an elite university's web course, is the university still elite? This is the issue of franchising. Should you focus on a small customer base that can pay a lot or become like the University of Phoenix and offer "just-in-time" education?<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See Marc Prensky's article at [www.marcprensky.com](http://www.marcprensky.com)

<sup>36</sup> The largest university in the USA, offers no tenure, uses short courses as well as flexible delivery. A kind of just-in-time education

For large universities, there are two clear choices – elite university or low cost producers with hundreds of millions of new students all over the world as potential purchasers.

For the smaller university the only choice left is the niche university –focused in a particular area of excellence or in a particular locale – not trying to be too much, knowing one’s student market well.

The challenge to the traditional university is new competition from global players: multi-media corporations, elite universities that are expanding and branding, as well as low-cost producers. This makes their survival tenuous at best. With subsidies from states drying up, the writing appears to be on the wall.

These issues are already of concern in the USA and European nations. While it may be harder to see this in East Asian nations (and those colonized by England) since the State plays a much stronger role in education, eventually in five or ten years educational services will be privatized there as well. All universities will likely find themselves in a global market of students and other higher education (and primary education) providers.

However, a clever and robust university may find ways to combine all these structures, for example, by developing different campuses. One campus could focus on life-long learning and short courses. A second campus could be research focused, linked to government and industry, far more practical and action oriented. A third could be elite based, having student friendly teacher-student faculty ratios, focusing on grand questions of meaning and purpose. The Net could link them all, or there could be a fourth virtual campus, a net university.

### Scenarios for the Future

The next question is what are the probable scenarios for the future of the university. We use scenarios to reduce uncertainty, to define alternatives. Scenarios are also important in that they also help us rethink the present – they distance us from today.

#### *Center-Periphery reversed*

The six largest Internet-based distance-learning universities in the world are located in developing countries - Turkey, Indonesia, China, India, Thailand and Korea. While mainly aimed at university-level education of adults, net education is spreading to primary and secondary education. As Asia continues to rise – with India and China being the two new stars - we can well imagine a world where universities in Asia are the best.

However, to do so, they need to (1) challenge feudal societal structures, that is create capacity so the university can lead instead of mimic society. (2) Move away from ethnicity and toward more global sentiments. (3) Finally, universities in Asia need to be



futures-oriented. They need to move away from lamenting over past injustices or historical grandeurs and instead use tradition to create new futures. But one aspect of tradition is no longer helpful: the male domination<sup>37</sup>. For Asian universities to prosper globally, gender partnership is a necessary factor.

### *Center-Periphery enhanced*

In this second future, business as usual continues, but more thereof. Western universities continue the rise. They already have edges in gaming, digitalisation, globalisation, not to mention patenting<sup>38</sup> and university entrepreneurship. They will use their prestige and wealth to leap further ahead. Asian universities will continue to fall behind as there is neither talent nor tolerance, and indeed, in some places, little technology.

### *Global Market – Multiple markets, fluid*

In this third scenario, centre-periphery distinctions disappear quickly, as the world is far more malleable. Indeed, the leaders may be western universities in Asia! In terms of structure, elite universities, though having high costs, will stay ahead because of their extensive use of high technology (for research, management and communication), star professors (giving them everything they want to stay at the university, building mini-universities around them), and by virtue of building on previous branding.

At the mass level, the market is likely to segment. Some universities will go on-line, many will be battered by new multinational players and start to disappear or swim downward to the community college level (the professionally oriented two year system). This is the market ripest for change.

At the niche level – short courses, new fields, inclusion of high school –there are many opportunities. In times of transition, many new niches are created in the evolutionary landscape. Niches are often safe, and they can be experimental. However, they may or may not survive when a new dominant paradigm for the university emerges.

### *Global governance model*

In this future, the Bologna process currently underway in Europe becomes a global process. Ministries around the world cooperate, allowing agreement on credit transfers. There is far more of a fluid movement of students and professors. A global WHO type organisation results called the World University Organization (WUO). While bureaucratic, it ensures standardisation across the planet. Funding helps poorer areas

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<sup>37</sup> See the works of Riane Eisler. [www.partnershipway.org](http://www.partnershipway.org)

<sup>38</sup> The *Human Development Report 1999* reported that 97 percent of all patents worldwide were held by industrial countries.

innovate and the world-as-university image thrives. However, as with UNESCO, there are many problems. To make up for States withholding funds, private universities jump on the global bandwagon.

### *The End of the University*<sup>39</sup>

Over time, the university as we know it disappears. The WUO cannot manage the complexity of knowledge and learning. New forms of learning – tele-presence and sensor telemetry<sup>40</sup>, dramatic discoveries in brain-mind science, in virtual learning - all lead to a new world. The entire world becomes a university.

These futures are certainly broad; they give us a sense of the overall possibilities. And of course for the university planner, policy analyst, they are too broad. More important are *meso level scenarios*. In partnership with Martin Fitzgerald, Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of Newcastle (Australia)<sup>41</sup>, I present these meso scenarios.

To develop these futures, our first question was, what are the critical drivers? Two were identified.

- (1) The capacity of the academics to respond to the various changes; and,
- (2) Corporatisation-globalisation and other financial challenges universities are facing.

Based on these two variables, two axes are created: Traditional/Feudal to Corporate/Global and Reactive to Responsive. From these two variables, four scenarios were created<sup>42</sup>.

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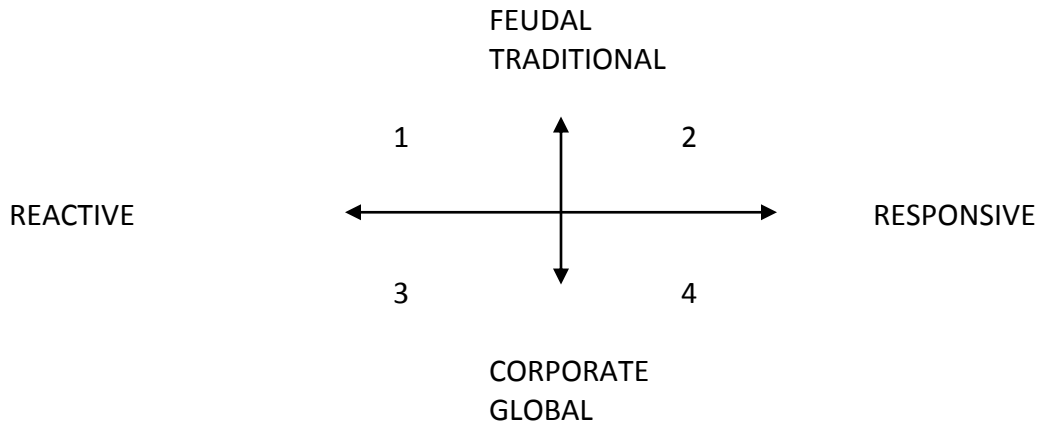
<sup>39</sup> For more on this, see Majid Tehranian, "The End of the University", in *The Information Society* (12 1996), p. 446.

<sup>40</sup> See [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com) for more on this.

<sup>41</sup> These were developed at the Applied Futures Learning Course, Mt Eliza Centre for Executive Education, November 21-25, Melbourne, Australia. Dr. Robert Burke is the director of futures thinking there.

<sup>42</sup> For more on scenario writing, see Sohail Inayatullah, *Questioning the Future*. Tamsui, Tamkang University Press, 2005.

## Capacity to Respond and Nature of the University



### 1. Corporatized-Responsive (Quadrant 4)

This is the university where both administrative and academics understand the world has changed, and that new agreements must be negotiated. Governance moves from guilds to learning organisations. New sources of revenue are sought, generally from the market. The administration seeks to facilitate the creative potentials of academics. Academics do not see themselves as selling out to the corporate world. Rather, they integrate their entrepreneurial selves into their identity<sup>43</sup>. New technologies are used in ways that meet the changing needs of professors, administrators, and students.

### 2. Feudal-traditional – Responsive (Quadrant 2)

This is the niche university. The hierarchy of the professoriate - the elitist Harry Potter nature of the university - remains and the rituals of graduation continue, but it becomes more and more restricted in terms of number, though not in terms of funding. The Vice-Chancellor remains known for his scholarship and leadership capacity, not just for his capacity to earn. Academics respond to the changing world, but discriminate as to what needs to change, and what traditions must be stable.

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<sup>43</sup> Essential here is the work of Hal and Sidra Stone. They focus on the disowned selves – selves that we push away as we focus on particular identities. For academics, in the search for the purity of truth, the business self is pushed away. Classically for the corporate world, the ethical self is pushed away in the drive for profits. Integrating these various selves may be the most important challenge for academics. See <http://www.enotalone.com/authors.php?aid=14>.

### 3. Corporate-Reactive (Quadrant 3)

This is the mass situation: the staff are passive aggressive, resistant to changes. There is superficial adoption of new technologies (putting entire books or courses on line instead of more interactive tailored learning methods). The industrial model is torn down but not in collaboration with academics. It is done by fiat. Tenure is slowly eliminated and freedom of speech is diminished. Students are seen as customers even when they may prefer to keep the classical scholar-disciple formulation. Department chairs have little understanding of communication skills, of multiple ways of knowing. Health indicators are poor throughout the organization.

### 4. Traditional/Feudal – Reactive (Quadrant 1)

This is the insular university, more and more impossible to retain. In this future, the hierarchy and feudal nature of the university is maintained. There is a lack of willingness to respond to globalisation, virtualisation and corporatisation. Governance remains top-down and financing remains a problem. The deep myth is that of Cinderella, hoping for a fairy god mother (the State or a Benefactor) to save the day.

Which scenario will result? Certainly any are possible, however, creating responsive scenarios requires facilitative leadership, leadership that listens to all stakeholders and includes them in mapping alternative futures and creating desired futures.

### The Futures of the Profession

Let me now return to the future of the academic. What is the role of the academic in this dramatically changing world? The first possibility is the traditional professor. This is the agent of authority, great in one field but knowing less about other fields and with low levels of communicative intelligence. Adapting to wide scale changes would be difficult for the expert academic. Corporatisation, virtualisation and even trans-disciplinary projects would be resisted.

The second potential role is the professor as web-content designer. This is actively engaging in the development of new technologies. Keeping a critical eye for issues of equity and inclusion but also being innovative in their use. While the current age-cohort is unlikely to engage in these activities, younger academics may be more amendable. They are more likely to be able to see knowledge as quick, interactive, multi-disciplinary, and always changing. They want to be web-designers and information designers. While the old role for academics was to write books, the new role is that of creating novel types of interactive content. And the content will likely be far more global and multicultural than we have so far seen.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> For more on this, see Sohail Inayatullah, Marcus Bussey and Ivana Milojevic, eds. *Neohumanistic Educational Futures: Liberating the Pedagogical Intellect*. Tamsui, Tamkang University, 2006.

The professor as web-content designer creates a third potential role: the knowledge navigator. In this role, the student (and his or her worldview) becomes paramount. To do this, action learning methodology is crucial. Action learning means that through an iterative process, the content of the course is developed with the student. While the professor may have certain authoritative/expert knowledge, his or her role is more of a mentor, a knowledge navigator, to help the student develop his or her potential within categories of what is important to the student. Indeed, the categories of "student" and "professor" are seen as narratives: to be used but not used by. Thus, it is not the technology *per se*, though this is important, but using the technology to enable the student/professor to create desired futures.

A fourth role is that of traditional corporate man, the salary man. In this future, the lecturer understands the new corporate game, delivers research funds to the university and moves up the ladder: from student, to lecturer, to professor, to assistant Dean, to Dean and then eventually to Vice-Chancellor.

However, the traditional stable world of the academic – quiet space in the library, to reflect and to research problems that are not immediately relevant – may be gone. As the university continues to causalise, the research and community climate that long term positions (and friendships) create, will begin to disappear.

In any role, the key for the academic in a disruptive and changing world is to understand the inner dimension of what it means to be an academic, i.e. to explore one's root metaphors: Is learning about co-creating with others? Is learning about filling empty minds? Is learning about helping others have access to tools? Finding a role in a changing world can emerge best when there is clarity of one's inner purpose. This is true for the university as well: what is the deeper purpose and mission that can sustain during changing and sometimes difficult times?

## **Conclusions**

The university is not dead but transforming. For my personal perspective, I would like to retain the notion of community of scholars but with far more sensitivity to market, to student, to communities, and to planetary problems.

While respectful of others, I also want to keep the notion of dissent. This is what leads to social and physical innovation. Dissent challenges power and the normal way of doing things in every generation. In a religious system, the scholar must challenge the power of god; in a secular system, the scholar must challenge the power of the state; in a materialistic system, the power of wealth; and in a technopolis, the instrumental power of technology.

Finally, I believe that as academics, our work is not only external, but internal, integrating our various archetypes: the *worker*, serving the student, community and market, but especially planet; the *warrior*, challenging what is wrong in the system, and creating better rules; the *intellectual*, creating new ideas and innovation, understanding, communication, creating and transforming the world; and the *entrepreneur*, creating new value, creating new wealth, applying what we learn.

This means integrating our disowned selves – the entrepreneur, for one, but also the playful aspect of life, often neglected by the serious academic. A further challenge will be to recover the spiritual dimension of the academic and of the university. This is moving toward deep reflection, seeing the intellect as only one tool of the mind. As the Indian philosopher Sarkar argued<sup>45</sup>, the intellect must be liberated if we are to create a new world.

Can we do all that?

If we do not respond to the challenges facing universities then what will happen. Most likely, it will be business as usual, muddling through, things getting worse and worse, more and more labour/management conflicts, and more and more loss of respect for the academic and the university.

I would prefer creative responses to the challenges to corporatisation, virtualisation and globalisation. The industrial and classical images of the university are changing. Resisting this is futile. However, merely adopting corporatisation, globalisation and virtualising uncritically would be a tragic error. A creative entanglement of outside and inner world is required.

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<sup>45</sup> See Sohail Inayatullah, *Understanding Sarkar*. Leiden, Brill, 2002.