



Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University

Feminist Flights, Fights and Failures

Edited by
Yvette Taylor and Kinneret Lahad



Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education

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Yvette Taylor • Kinneret Lahad
Editors

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Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education

ISBN 978-3-319-64223-9

ISBN 978-3-319-64224-6 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64224-6>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018930501

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Cover illustration: Alexander Spatari / Getty Images

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature

The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Acknowledgement

Thanks to all the contributors in this collection, which has been a real pleasure to bring together. Chapter 4 'Navigating the Emotional Landscapes of Academia: Queer Encounters' was initially published as Taylor, Y. (2013) 'Queer Encounters of Sexuality and Class: Navigating Emotional Landscapes of Academia' *Emotion, Space and Society*, and thanks are given for allowing reproduction here.

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Introduction: Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University: Feminist Flights, Fights, and Failures

Yvette Taylor and Kinneret Lahad

Contributors to this collection offer a contemporary account of what it means to experience and *feel* academia, as a privilege, risk, entitlement, or failure (Sparkes 2007; Pereira 2016, 2017). Neoliberalization has been associated with bureaucratic administration, as commercialization and corporatization and ultimately as ‘academic capitalism’, and together, we ask if feminist spaces can offer freedom or flight from the corporatized and commercialized neoliberal university (Taylor 2014; Thwaites and Pressland 2016; The Res-Sisters 2016).

In many ways, this collection captures a critical and particularly vulnerable moment in academia as higher education faces violent pressures that put many scholars at risk. Global capitalism and the growing focus on the sciences lead many universities to adopt market-driven models, with numerous departments, mostly within the humanities and social

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Y. Taylor, K. Lahad (eds.), *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University*, Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64224-6_1

science, being closed down. Many colleagues, departments, disciplines, and institutions are under constant threat of being closed down, forced to downsize, lay off staff, and justify their existence according to rigid market-driven models. The chapters in this volume differently reflect and respond to these worrying global trends through which scholars are constantly pressured to become successful and efficient fundraisers, produce quantified results, and follow the logics of laws of supply and demand.

This situation becomes bleaker nowadays when neoliberal policies are fused with the growing interventions from right wing, nationalist political leaders, and bureaucrats in higher education worldwide. Severe restraints are being imposed upon academic freedom and the independence of universities worldwide, and such transitions are posing severe dangers and threats to the autonomies of universities and academic freedom. Universities in Russia, Hungary, and Turkey are under serious threat of closure initiated by local nationalist politicians. In Turkey, students and professors were imprisoned, and nearly 5000 academics were made redundant after the failed army coup last July. In Iran, Niger, Uganda, Pakistan, Palestine, and Thailand, scholars and human rights activists were arrested and harassed (see: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/academic-freedom-media-review-archive/>).

Many scholars are subject to travel bans, others are forced to resign, and students are expelled and detained. These practices often adopt a rhetoric which portrays universities and intellectuals as potential enemies of the populace. Such violent rhetoric is used to silence and prevent any unwanted political criticism and is already receiving backup from 'Professor Watch Lists' seen in countries such as Israel and the USA. Undoubtedly, such development sets the ground for increasing interference of governments and bureaucrats in universities worldwide and also has gendered implications. Such a worrying example can be found in the Israeli council for higher education decision which has approved gender-segregated programs in academia for ultra-Orthodox male students, as of May 2017 (Yarden 2017). By doing this they have approved a policy which bans female lecturers to teach male students yet allowing male lecturers to teach female students.

It is important to stress that these acts of violence, cuts, and layoffs are met with resistance. For example, the threats of closing down of universi-

ties in Turkey, Hungary, and Russia have led to local and global protests, international petitions, and global discussions about the value and importance of universities including the invaluable contribution of the humanities and the social science. This current state of affairs entangled with other forms of domination such as sexism, racism, and classism intensify feelings of despair, experiences of powerlessness, and depression.

We believe that this book could also serve as an important reminder of the significant role feminism plays and can play by highlighting and challenging these interlocking structures of domination. As a vibrant and constantly evolving social movement feminism is particularly attuned to changing and continuing multiple forms of oppression aimed at providing a nuanced analysis of power relations and posing alternative modes of knowledge. Clearly, our use of the term feminism here takes into consideration multiple forms of domination adopting an intersectional approach which views issues of race, gender, sexuality, and class as interconnected. This approach also recognizes the various privileges and disadvantages of feminist scholars which vary, including via benefits of seniority and tenure.

From this perspective, academic life is considered from across the career course, including early career, part-time, and senior-established scholars. This book centers and queries career categories in becoming (un)unstuck in university asking what does it mean to 'be' or 'become' academic, when this seems endlessly deferred and when our arrival might not be known, announced, or legitimized by others. The stretch of 'early career' as up to ten years post-PhD is something to dwell on, as are the (dis)connections between, for example, early mid-established career status (Locke et al. 2015). Until recently, the category—and abbreviation—of 'early career researcher' to 'ECR' was rather unheard of, while of course there were always postdocs setting out at the beginning of their careers (and always vulnerable, impermanent academic workers, and those doing 'jobs' rather than thinking about 'careers') (Wakeling 2010; Thwaites and Pressland 2016). Conversely, in academic mobilities across the career stage, we are endlessly displaying and building our own value, with presence and permanence apparently announcing an arrival (even as we ask ourselves 'what next?', moving from 'early' to 'mid' to 'established' career).

We are encouraged to self-recognize in academia, to enact career mobility via our CVs, bound to academic identities—rather than to social justice actions. Academic entrance, career mobility, and institutional rewards often imply a recognition, even arrival, within higher education, where objective success may be measured through increased publications, grant income, and institutional visits, producing the ‘international’ academic able to take up her space. This is something we are encouraged to celebrate as a successful example of meritocratic promise and rational paths followed and sustained. These contentious points of arriving, departing, and traveling through institutional space intersect with what we might feel about occupying academia, as a potential generative and sustained encounter. Given this, there is work to be done in stretching these processes, beyond the individual uptake of academic space, self-telling, or self-recognition. Academic knowledge, production, and activism has been understood as an ability to articulate, activate and to know differently, but these blockages, as a heightened part of the neoliberal university, perhaps necessitate another way of speaking back, rather than articulating ‘early’ or ‘established’ as entitlements or end points. Here, we could usefully return to some feminist long-standing voices in particular to better think through the histories, presences, and futures of career stretches and necessary (and tiring) feminist repetitions.

What is it then to be a feminist academic in the neoliberal university at this particular juncture? As we appear in academia, we create certain presences and we have to be careful to ask ‘what else is carried with us?’ What weight do we bear and how is this recognized or disappeared? What weight do we expect others to carry and how are expectations, entitlements, and burdens felt in inhabiting feminist positions and what of ‘bad feeling’ or ‘unhappiness’ among feminist? The idea of a ‘feminist academic’ is loaded: as someone who works hard(er), brings on ‘early career academics’, succeeds in the face of pressure, pursues international opportunities, funding, publication, perhaps with no sign of permanence or promotion. Considering her (mis)positions enables a broader reflection on the state of higher education and on the wider role of sociological research in face of the political and economic crises. Connecting private-public sentiments has always been a part of feminist knowledge production

with, for example, Pereira (2012: 284) noting that ‘many feminist scholars understand their work as a project of both cumulative and critical intervention in the academy: they seek not just to generate more knowledge but also, and centrally, to question and transform existing modes, frameworks, and institutions of knowledge production’.

Academic women and feminist scholars continue to experience discrimination and marginalization (Taylor 2012; Henderson 2015). Everyday judgements and distinctions are always manifesting in social interactions, and academic settings are no exception. Many have written passionately and provocatively about the awkward encounters in academia where some seem to be versed and conversant, while others occupy marginal positions—and others aren’t even in the room. We know this is a matter of structural inequality rather than simply not being able to appear and perform. There are enduring and repeated headline counts about the lack and even decrease of female professorial appointments, with the searching but unanswered question repeating ‘where are the women?’ The introduction of equity policies and guidelines, such as the Athena SWAN scheme, to improve the gender profile of universities has become a well-established paradoxical trope of the neoliberal university, as with ‘diversity’ indications generally (Addison 2012; Ahmed 2012; Mountford 2014). But question of insertion as gendered resolution is too simple; adding a woman often does not necessarily unsettle the story and, often, she might find herself unsettled. She might find herself captured and marketed as the institutional promise of ‘diversity’ made to smile and sigh.

Notions of the ideal, achieving academic have a significant impact on what types of academic behaviors and endeavors are considered indicative of excellence and worthy of permanence or promotion, and female academics and feminist scholars continue to be dismissed as niche, temporary, and junior. Yet the concept of a ‘feminist academic’ is also inherently problematic, and as such we explore how variety of different types of academic work: research, teaching, conference participation. These categories are also entangled in academic structures, sentiments, and subjectivities: they are solidified in, for example, entry and promotion schemes as well as calls, and they ask us to identify in particular stages of ‘being’ or ‘becoming’ academic, while arguably denying the possibility of ever

arriving. In this context, the concept of feminist space is dialogic, it is never ‘fixed or finished’ but constantly responsive to its environment and so remain receptive to refinements of this concept and its possibilities. The questions we explore here are how sustaining spaces—and feminist selves—can still be a productive and desired endeavor in our neoliberal institutions of higher education.

The chapters demonstrate the broad range of experiences and disclose some of the multifaceted experiences practice by addressing the following questions:

- Can feminist spaces offer freedom or flight from the corporatized and commercialized neoliberal university? How are feminist voices felt, heard, received, silenced, and masked? What is it to be a feminist academic in the neoliberal university? How are expectations, entitlements, and burdens felt in inhabiting feminist positions and what of ‘bad feeling’ or ‘unhappiness’ *among* feminist? How are emotions structured by particular academic temporalities (incl. job insecurity, ‘early career’ status, ‘senior’ status, temporariness, permanency)? How are indicators of success/failure measured and felt?
- What are the material, affective, and embodied performativities of being a feminist academic in the neoliberal university? What are the expectations, entitlements, and burdens in inhabiting feminist positionalities?
- How are feminist academics negotiating and resisting neoliberal managerialist practices? How might they be complicit in these processes and how are different feminist unequally placed in particular times and places?

This collection introduces international and interdisciplinary feminist contributions, which intervene in a range of contemporary debates in social theory, sociological methods and knowledge production. The various empirical and theoretical chapters serve to demonstrate issues of ‘feeling academic’ as imagined by researchers across disciplinary boundaries by engaging with a variety of methodological approaches in different geographical and cultural locations. This variety of chapters enrich debates and allow us to examine the diverse experiences and perspectives

of feeling academic and the ways in which it intersects with feeling feminist. Despite the different geographical locations, the global culture of neoliberalism and its effects emerges again and again. Repeated accounts of feeling academic involved experiences of isolation, helplessness and frustration in dealing with various pressures in the neoliberal climate of precarity; we need to take seriously—and challenge—these feelings of failure, launching instead a more collective politicized response, fostered by contributors.

Heather Shipley's chapter 'Failure to Launch? Feminist Endeavors as a Partial Academic' explores what constitutes 'success' in academia and how has that notion shifted in the last decade. According to Shipley the norms of transitioning from postgraduate studies into a lectureship or professorship are less and less the reality in an environment where those posts are decreasingly available and where many scholars become employed in nonacademic posts while simultaneously engaging in academic endeavors. In her chapter she discusses how the inherent tension between being a feminist and participating in a competitive academic environment further complicates traditional notions about 'success'. Drawing on the ups and downs of life as a partial academic, holding a nonacademic post she considers the ways the academic environment—while theoretically promoting feminism through feminist programs—as a system itself undermines and devalues feminist pursuits, rewarding instead decidedly nonfeminist goals through competition and individual achievement.

Emily Henderson's chapter entitled 'Feminist Conference Time: Aiming (Not) to Have Been There' is an ethnographic study of three national women's studies conferences. Henderson exemplifies the multiple temporalities that are experienced by feminist scholars when they make a break with the everyday and move their bodies to a conference. Henderson's work demonstrates the ways in which a feminist conference involves an embodied experience of being there, of being present in space and time, and of taking time to think and take stock. However, she also shows that 'being there' may also be experienced as an irritation that is impeding two more future-oriented modes of being: 'having been there' and 'not having been there'. The 'having been there' mode relates to the conference experience that is lived for the gains it will have brought, a

line on the CV, for example. The ‘not having been there’ mode refers to the expectation that the conference attendee will be able to return home seemingly without having interrupted normal work patterns, having kept up with emails, for example. These modes, which may be experienced simultaneously, represent some of the tensions involved in occupying the subject position of ‘feminist academic’.

In ‘Navigating the Emotional Landscapes of Academia: Queer Encounters’, Yvette Taylor considers the processes of being academic and the emotional disjunctures across time and place felt in occupying academia. Taylor explores the promise of entering and achieving in higher education and argues that it is at once seductive and disturbing, felt and encountered across the university environment, via administrative, teaching, and research concerns. She shows that the emotional stickiness of these contexts contrasts with the vision of the engaged, inclusive institution that now welcomes all through its door, with this rhetoric of arrival and belonging effacing starting points, varied journeys, different labors, and divided recognitions. In arguing for an emotional presence constituted in and through research, Taylor considers the emotional landscape of class and sexuality, in particular, asking what is taken with us as we travel through academia, where feminist research in particular has been critical of the traveling subject (or ‘self’), who tells only their own story.

From a different perspective, in her chapter ‘Performing “Foreign Talentness” in a Chinese University: An Auto-ethnographical Account’ Lauren Ila Misiaszek explores performing ‘foreign talentness’ in a Chinese university by developing an auto-ethnography about her experiences as the first full-time foreign education faculty in China’s normal (teacher training) system. For her, auto-ethnography proves to be an important tool in the development of a critical sociology of higher education in China. In her chapter, she discusses the multiple temporalities that she has embodied particularly early career, temporariness, and insecurity as a foreign scholar that has no access to national research funding schemes in China or in her country of citizenship. She also delves into how she performs as the only foreign female faculty member, both in interactions with academic and administrative staff and with students. Misiaszek thus offers a unique analysis of how the concept of “neoliberalism” manifests

itself Chinese universities and the ways in which it has affected her by a rethinking and reconsidering the notion of foreign talentness.

Sarah Burton's chapter 'Writing Yourself In? The Price of Playing the (Feminist) Game in Academia' builds on ethnographic fieldwork with academic sociologists and questions the extent to which feminist positions are able to 'become', 'arrive', or assert themselves as legitimate within the academy. Orienting itself around specific accounts of how sociologists negotiate the demands of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), her chapter focuses on sociologists' narratives of affective writing practices and how these relate to the production of knowledge understood as legitimate within the discipline. These discussed accounts show how feminist positions work in paradoxical and contradictory ways, on the one hand—as supportive, generative, and creative but also demanding of onerous and time-consuming emotional labor—thus arguably disadvantaging the feminist academic. Through examination of how affective working practices enable or interrupt a sociologist's ability to understand herself as legitimate Burton claims that the price feminist academics pay for a seat at the table is a costly one of exhaustion, self-doubt, and unwilling co-option into hegemonic practices.

C. Laura Lovin's piece on 'Work and Neoliberal-Corporatist University' engages with recent transformations undergone by the US higher education in general and the field of Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) in particular. Lovin's chapter addresses the trajectories of Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) PhDs who left academia in search for professional lives that combine feminist scholarship with activism, service, and policy making. As in the case of the other disposable population of workers, these shifts have psychological, social, organizational, and political consequences. Nevertheless, nontenured academic workers did not leave these changes unchallenged. By analyzing four in-depth interviews conducted with feminist professional recipients of PhDs in the field of WGS, she explores four themes that recurred in the interviews: the timing of the decision to look for a feminist professional future outside academia; the search for a work ethos that bypasses competitiveness, surpassing the isolation of academic knowledge work; dealing with feelings of failure; and finally, reimagining graduate training in women's and gender studies.

The chapter 'Feel the Fear and "Feminist" Anyway: Being a Challenging Presence in the Neoliberal University' by Órla Meadhbh explores the ways in which early career feminist academics and those on precarious contracts negotiate and manage their own fears in the neoliberal university. Meadhbh claims that identifying as a feminist and enacting feminist politics in academia often positions feminist scholars as 'killjoys' (Ahmed 2010) and therefore as a challenging presence that highlights structural inequalities. Her contention is that sometimes the killjoy position is actively chosen and pursued as a political aim and sometimes one is positioned as the killjoy by others due to presumed political beliefs or through being 'out of place' in the whiteness, the middle-classness, and the cissexist-ableist patriarchy of the academy. Drawing on auto-ethnographic data and interviews with early career feminist academics, she explores tactics used to manage fear of being 'too challenging', endangering one's precarious position in the academia while still 'being feminist'.

Maddie Breeze raises similar themes in her chapter 'Feeling Ambivalent in Early Career Academia: Auto-ethnographic Tales of "Success" and "Failure"'. She does this by examining the ways in which failure and success are felt in early career, feminist academic work in the entrepreneurial university. By exploring and rethinking 'imposter syndrome' as a public feeling and situating it in a broader social and political context, she maps the emotional landscape of feelings of deficiency according to intersecting forms of social inequality. Breeze also asks what can impostor syndrome tell us about shifts in the structure and governance of higher education and offers to reconceptualize this syndrome not as an individual deficiency or private problem of faulty self-esteem to be overcome but instead as a resource for action and site of agency in contemporary higher education. In other words, she claims, thinking through 'imposter syndrome' as a public feeling shows how a felt—as inauthentic, fraudulent, and inadequate—relationship to established measures of 'success' and indicators of belonging can be refigured as a critique of these standards, rather than as a deficiency of the self.

In 'Gender and Waiting in Everyday Academic Life', Barbara Read and Lisa Bradley explore the ways in which these temporalities are discursively constructed and experienced as well as the emotions they generate. By using experimental auto-ethnographies, they explore their own

experiences of waiting in their 'academic' lives over the course of a single week. Their chapter emphasizes how their experiences are subjectively related both to their own social positionings (in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, age) as well as to their material positionings, for example, the 'reality' of our occupational and contract status and wider caring/family responsibilities. They thus reflect upon the complex ways in which these experiences and identities shape their own experiences of 'waiting', and the ways in particular conceptions of time and the temporal influence the ways in which we perform the 'academic' in their everyday working lives.

Pat Thomson's 'A Long Goodbye to the Good Girl' offers an analysis of the ramifications of 'being a good girl' in academia. Contemporary universities, as she argues, rely on academic staff who are ready and willing to be highly productive on a number of fronts such as publish widely and for a range of audiences, publish for audit purposes, attract funding, work in interdisciplinary teams, produce demonstrable research impact, teach face to face and online to increasing numbers of students, and so on. In her chapter, she considers how these performative institutional logics and practices trigger responses in particular women, particularly those trained to be 'good girls'. By drawing on auto-ethnographic, she argues that schooling and family practices combined with second-wave feminism have led to the emergence of academic women highly disposed to getting ahead in the scholarly game while also, and at the same time, being suspicious and critical of it. In her work she also suggests that when facing the inevitability of retirement she and other women in a similar position may finally be able to adopt a different strategy, that of 'doing just enough of what's expected', the rejection of doing the right thing, and of being a 'good girl'.

From a different perspective, Susanne Gannon, Karin MacKay, Sarah Powell, and Clare Power's work 'Being and Becoming an Academic: A Collaborative Exploration of Being and Becoming Academic' uses a collective biography methodology to explore stories of the precarious processes and liminal spaces of being and becoming 'academic'. Gannon et al. examine how the well-documented practices that characterize the corporate/managerial/enterprise university frame the experiences of people aspiring to work in the sector and the affective and embodied ramifications of such practices as casualization, contractualism, and competition

between intellectual workers. Informed by work on academic subjectivities in contemporary universities and specifically on analyses of women's experiences, they examine ambivalence, desire, and disappointment in their experiences of securing PhDs and seeking work in universities. Their contention is that for early career and aspiring academics, becoming 'academic' is a precarious, contingent, and (potentially) permanent process with implications for the well-being of individuals and institutions. This collective biography brings together a group of researchers around a topic of shared interest to generate and interrogate memories of lived experience in terms of the rationalities and discursive resources by providing a critique of the individualism and competition of neoliberal subjectivities and offering to destabilize the privatization of research outputs in academic capitalism.

Daphna Hacker's work 'Crying on Campus' discusses the gendered dimensions of crying in higher education. She conceptualizes crying as a gendering border that reinforces common patriarchal perceptions. As universities are constructed as the epitome of rationality, Hacker argues that crying has no place on campus as men and women alike must perform according to masculine standards if they are to fulfill the role of scholars employed by a university. Her contention is that these standards are based on a hierarchal mind-body dichotomy that places pure rationality as the ideal and demands self-control and emotional distance—which do not correlate well with the messy business of unrepressed tears. Through this exploration, she provides a gendered lens through which she discusses the tension between the perception of academia as a sphere of pure scholarship that is superior to economic calculations and bureaucracy while at the same time being a neoliberal employer.

In her chapter 'When Love Becomes Self-Abuse: Gendered Perspectives on Unpaid Labor in Academia', Francesca Coin asserts that today academic labor is often presented as a labor of love. Accordingly, this was seen as a natural attribute of the female personality that required no monetary compensation. This applies in particular for young, female academics in which scholarly labor is treated as a form of self-expression that fulfills an affective need, hence turning the actual conditions of labor into afterthoughts. Drawing on data collected from an online survey and

in-depth interviews, she shows how many adjunct professors and precarious scholars in Italy barely make a living. Thus, although mainstream discourse tends to present academic labor as being both elitist and out of touch, the privilege of young scientists that 'do what they love', her interviews often portray academia as a de facto exploitative labor market where young women are expected to provide high-skilled labor for extremely low or no wages. She also demonstrates the ways in which young women are trapped in the urge to be competitive in the labor market endure financial hardships, long periods of isolation while accepting the promise of future employment as the affective currency of unpaid work.

Nick Rumens' chapter 'Teaching Gender in a Postfeminist Management Classroom: A Gay Man's Perspective' centers upon some of the challenges in teaching gender inequality to students which appear to give more credence to neoliberal discourses. According to Rumens this outlook enables students to engage more easily with the often challenging topic of gender inequality. While some students accept they may experience gender inequality in the workplace, many others frequently consign gender inequality as something that happened in the past, or dislocate it spatially as something that occurs in other cultural contexts and to other people, or as something that is unlikely to affect them in the future. Within this framework free choice is a recurring leitmotif, illustrated in how students discursively construct notions of a 'postfeminist workplace' in which 'hard work' and making the 'right choices' are the primary means to avoid gender discrimination and inequality. This context allows Rumens to explore the connections between postfeminist and neoliberal discourses and also articulate the personal frustrations, pleasure, and concerns about teaching gender inequality as an openly gay man in the context of the business school.

Lastly, Cristina Costa's chapter 'Digital Scholars: A Feeling for the Academic Game' centers on the felt perceptions of academics engaged in digital scholarship activities which are seen as forms of academic contributions. Costa explores if and how such practices are redefining both the meaning of academia and what it feels to be (an) academic. Drawing on empirical evidence from a study with academics engaged in digital scholarship activities, her chapter offers reflections on digital scholars' internal conflicts regarding how they feel, perceive, and nego-

tiate their role in academia. By drawing inspiration from Bourdieu's logic of practice, she explains how academics incorporate and fight the neoliberal university. In doing so, her research explores both how academics feel and develop a feeling for the academic game and thus makes a contribution to the literature and ideas about academic identities in a neoliberal context.

This collection aims to reveal the material, affective, epistemological, and ontological of being a feminist academic in the fast-paced neoliberal, corporatized, and commercialized university. We hope that the following volume will open up the possibility for further debates about the role and nature of feminism and higher education as well as creating safe spaces for from which it is possible to make ongoing counter hegemonic claims.

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Failure to Launch? Feminist Endeavors as a Partial Academic

Heather Shipley

Introduction

Measures of success and failure in academia have become ritualistically tracked and analyzed, across institutional and geographic boundaries. It is not simply about the number of publications but the *quality* of the publications—the ranking of the journal, the role of the author, the number of citations. Invited presentations and keynote lectures overtake the more standard (and accessible) panel presentation; the competitiveness of the conference itself is measured. Supervising students is marked as successful when the student transitions into a tenure-stream position; credit is seemingly awarded to the professor whose student has not only completed their degree but who moves into a position that is seen as an important transition from that degree. These qualifications of what counts as success, and what is expected but not deemed to be noteworthy, necessarily influence the behaviors of academics—one cannot afford to

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Y. Taylor, K. Lahad (eds.), *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University*, Palgrave
Studies in Gender and Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64224-6_2

choose the 'least successful' path if seeking a full-time position, tenure, promotion, advancement, or even basic job security.

This chapter will consider the ways these notions of success and failure in academia, whether one is a full academic or partial (such as myself), impact the ways academics engage with one another and approach their own research. The norms of transitioning from post-graduate studies into a lectureship or professorship are less and less the reality in an environment where those posts are decreasingly available and where many scholars become employed in non-academic posts while simultaneously engaging in academic endeavors. In the midst of this changing landscape, the inherent tension between being a feminist and participating in a competitive academic environment further complicates traditional notions about 'success.'

The challenge of attempting to 'be' a feminist in an academic space begins in student life with the expectation that we are all competing with one another (for grades, for that conference slot, for a publication) and becomes a deeply entrenched aspect of academic life once the degree has been completed. Drawing on the ups and downs of life as a partial academic, holding a non-academic post and using unpaid time to continue to engage in academic endeavors, I will consider the ways the academic environment—while theoretically promoting feminism through feminist programs—as a system itself undermines and devalues feminist pursuits, rewarding instead decidedly nonfeminist goals through competition and individual achievement over group endeavors. Redefining what counts as academic success is the result both of a shifting employment market and of feminist engagement within a system that rewards un-feminist goals and aspirations; notions about success and failure within feminist academic endeavors subsequently recast what it is to 'be' an academic today.

Since the development of women's only institutions and further the implementation of women's and gender studies programs across universities, what practically speaking has been the impact of these changes? In this chapter I will reflect on what role women's and gender studies departments play within an academic institution, considering the impact these departments have on the feminist scholar and the academic environment more broadly. What are the implications when entry into academic success (via full-time faculty positions) becomes reduced?

The development of women's only institutions as a way to integrate women into higher education precedes any notion of a women's or gender studies programs. Both of these methods of female or feminist integration will be discussed in brief, reflecting on what it means at a practical level to (1) have more women within higher education who are not expected to participate in the workforce (specific to the creation of women's only institutions initially) and (2) offer programs based on feminist goals of cooperation which are still subjected to the managerial and competitive standards of any other department, thus rendering the possibility of feminist cooperation moot.

Feminism in Academic Institutions: Women and Women's Studies

Responding to feminist critiques of gender roles and impositions in the 1960s and 1970s (spearheaded earlier than that by movements such as the suffragettes), academic institutions began developing gender and women's studies programs and departments, though these programs were not universally adopted and were not without critique.¹ Prior to that, women's only academic institutions were created as a way to integrate more women into higher education, notably the Seven Sisters schools in the USA. These developments and the intentions behind them however are not singular—while the Seven Sisters schools offered unique opportunities for women who wanted a higher education, the expectation that women leave university for marriage (and motherhood) was still very much the norm. That is to say, women who attended these schools were not often expected to pursue a career based on their studies; rather the common view was that women were 'biding their time' in these studies prior to finding a husband (Solomon 1985).

Further, there are numerous well-known historical and contemporary examples of women who experience a higher degree of success than their male counterparts being ignored, dismissed, or disparaged for their achievement and work. Whether in science (Rosalind Franklin),² art (Margaret Keane),³ sports (Corey Cogdell-Unrein),⁴ or elsewhere, there is a long and troubling history of women's achievements being credited to

men, often the achievements are credited to their husbands. Although spaces have been created for women to seek out higher education, there is little expectation that women will become the leading experts in their field, and female academics continue to be disadvantaged within higher education (Jenkins 2014).

Many women have also hidden their gender by using their first initial, rather than their first name or have used male pen names so that their work would be taken seriously, rather than dismissed as ‘done by a woman.’ J.K. Rowling is a contemporary and notable example of a female author being advised to disguise her gender identity, to avoid readers being ‘put off’ by her gender (Davin 2006). Overtly sexist dismissal of work produced by women, because they are women, necessarily impacts the ways women approach their work and their careers—and additionally impacts whether women seek out advancement opportunities (Burgess-Jackson 2002). If ‘being a woman’ is reason enough to dismiss the work itself, how do women achieve ‘success’ in their professional lives?

The American Council on Education’s 2016 infobrief found that although women earned half or more of all BA degrees over the past three decades and half of all doctoral degrees in the last decade, women still do not hold associate or full professor positions at the same rate as men (ACE 2016).⁵ Access to education is clearly not the issue; rather, qualified women are still not being offered secure or prestigious positions at the same rate as their male peers. The report also pointed to the persistent pay gap between male and female academic: that ‘no matter the academic rank, men make more than women and are more likely to hold a tenure track position’ (ACE 2016).

Creating spaces for women within higher education has not provided an equal space for professional (or financial) achievement. Negative perceptions of the work produced by women, solely based on gender, and the continued insistence of attributing women’s successes to men—especially husbands—are some of the ways women’s and feminist endeavors continue to be challenged in contemporary society. Systemic barriers already disadvantage women in multiple professional spaces and clearly in academia. With institutional disadvantages in place based on gender, feminist endeavors are at once critical and viewed as an additional ‘knock’ against female academics and the work they produce.

Feminist Endeavors: Challenging the Academic Model

The first formal women's studies program in Canada began in 1973 at the University of British Columbia (Webber 2008: 40); currently almost 60 programs exist across Canada. However, many women's studies programs are still largely comprised of faculty whose primary appointment is in another department, faculty loans from other departments for courses and part-time faculty (Webber 2008; Braithwaite et al. 2005). Relying on cross-appointed faculty or part-time faculty has several important implications, in particular, the inability to develop a cohesive departmental program without the benefit of a stable work force. Transient or unstable participation in programs at a faculty level means that those who are cross-appointed or hired on a sessional basis are largely unable to commit to committee and departmental meetings and program development; further, they are not being paid for any kind of programming commitments they do engage in.

The Women's and Gender Studies et Recherches Féministes (WGSRF) website maintains an ongoing list of women's and gender studies programs at institutions across Canada (<http://www.wgsrf.com/>). At current count based on their master list, there are 58 women's and gender studies programs (of varying sizes) across Canada.⁶ Feminist practices regarding pedagogy, however, are not only about women's studies programs but the teaching of feminist theory across multiple sites. 'Teaching feminism' across disciplines, integrating feminist content in courses outside gender, sexuality and women's studies programs, is often met with resistance and derision. Responses such as 'that's not philosophy, that's feminism' (Jenkins 2014) are not uncommon, and even when reports of positive impacts of feminism on higher education are released (David 2014), they at the same time include narratives of isolation, derision, and the persistent reality that academia remains geared toward androcentrism (David 2014). Feminist theoretical and methodological insights are not restricted to teaching about gender or sexuality, but the reception of these insights continues to be negative outside women's and gender studies programs.

While there are still a large number of institutions without any kind of women's studies or gender studies programs, women in academia hold fewer higher paying roles than male academics—including lower pay for the same academic position as their male counterparts as well as fewer women promoted and awarded prestigious research chairs or higher paying positions within the institution. A recent review of the Canada Research Chairs program found that chairholders were still disproportionately white men; women, ethnic, and racial minorities continue to be the significant minority in these positions (Awde 2016).

Instability at a departmental level hinders the integration of feminist pedagogy as it also hinders engaging in feminist collective goal development. Systemic disadvantages against female scholars—and feminist endeavors—further demonstrate antifeminist institutional models in higher education, even in institutions with women and gender studies programs.

Feminism and the Institution

Academic articles about the backlash to feminism within universities cover personal experiences within academia and also provide survey data for the lack of gender representation among tenured faculty; increasingly statistics regarding who has tenure or a prestigious research position and who doesn't include additional disadvantaged categories, as those denied these positions are predominantly minorities across identities such as race, ethnicity, gender (Awde 2016, see also Almeida 1997). The increasing accessibility of women and gender's studies programs in the 1980s saw an uptick in female enrollment in those programs and correspondingly an uptick in reports of antifeminist backlash (Superson and Cudd 2002).

As stated by Burgess-Johnson:

the backlash against feminism—with feminism being understood simply as a social movement designed to promote equality between the sexes—takes many forms. It can be personal, as where an avowed or suspected feminist is ridiculed, despised or mistreated, or professional, wherein a particular feminist's work (scholarly or otherwise) is marginalized, discredited, or repudiated by colleagues. (2002: 20)

Negative or hostile responses to feminism, and feminist activism, are witnessed across multiple sites—public, private, political, legal—however, in professional environments, the consequences are both immediate and long term. Within professional communications with colleagues, derisive or demeaning comments have immediate impact on the individual's experience of academic life and the quality of their work environment. Long term the consequences can impact engagement beyond their immediate environment, whether it influences their ability to participate in prestigious events, secure funding, or transition into promoted positions. When the source of the negative impact is not the quality of the individual's work, it should be immediately concerning to all scholars and academics: feminist ideologies as the 'reason' for a backlash that impacts a scholar's ability to professionally advance ought to be considered a concern across faculty members, regardless of their own personal or political views.

The increasing reliance of institutions on nonpermanent faculty exacerbates the instability of 'being' an academic and further undercuts feminist endeavors by women's studies or gender studies departments—who are also forced to rely on contingent faculty—as it also creates instability for feminist scholars whose feminism might be viewed as 'a problem' in a managerial, consumer-driven university. Where feminist advocacy or feminist ideologies are negatively perceived in institutions reliant on unstable working populations, scholars who are demeaned and already in unstable positions are at further disadvantage (Webber 2008).

As described by Webber:

Women's Studies offers a space that is supposed to challenge the regime of rationality that operates in the academy. Women's Studies promises the use of liberatory pedagogies in its classes. Feminist faculty are supposed to be able to "do" things differently: research and publish from feminist perspectives, draw on feminist pedagogies in their teaching, and utilize feminist principles in their contributions to university governance. (2008: 40)

And yet, women's and gender studies departments are subject to the same administrative and managerial requirements as other departments on any campus; standards of review regarding faculty outputs are applied

across the institution, regardless of the desire to 'be' or 'do' academia differently as a feminist endeavor.

In the consumer marketplace of the neo-liberal university, the impacts of limited faculty and limited ability to do feminist pedagogy is felt in multiple ways (Ritzer 1996; Wagner 2014; Weiler 2001). Performance indicators as measures of success, such as impact assessments and teaching evaluations, have a negative influence on what feminist professors teach (Webber 2008). Job and career security are driven by competitive models of success, driven by impact analytics as overseen by administrative and managerial bodies at the university.

Further, studies have shown that female academics, in an effort to maintain cohesion with their feminist peers, marginalize themselves in order to avoid conflict and competition (Keller and Moglen 1987). Female academics who are viewed as focused solely on advancing their own careers are described by their peers as 'male-identified' (Keller and Moglen 1987). The 'colonization' of women within higher education (Arnot 1982) and the requirement to meet performance indicators set out by institutional regimes places the feminist academic in a precarious position. Engagement with female and feminist peers, and the desire to maintain positive relations, adds another influencing factor to the ways feminist academics engage within their own network—and the derision that can be directed at colleagues who are not seen as part of the collective. The 'myth of the harmonious sisterhood' of feminism has been shown to drive behaviors in feminist scholars which impact negatively on their 'success' and is seen as dividing out scholars who do not participate within 'the sisterhood' (Keller and Moglen 1987: 505).

The integration of more female academics in institutions and the influence of feminism on higher education is viewed as a positive change for many, but the reality is still that academia is male-dominated (David 2014). David argues that feminism in the academy has been seduced by neo-liberal corporate models, resulting in an increasingly tense environment of competition which denies access to feminist engagement. The changing dynamic of higher education in response to more managerial review and as connected to a consumer-driven society means that the role of the academic generally is required to shift to conform to these expectations. The increasing reporting requirements and specifically the forms of

production that are expected impose a corporate model on the academic institution which mirrors a market driven by access to consumption 24/7 (Ritzer 1996).

Neo-liberal influence on the academic institution is permeated by consumer expectations that the university provides students with both unlimited accessibility to 'services' (i.e., 24/7 email communication) as well as the drive to produce a university experience that is geared to the wants of the consumer (student) (Ritzer 1996). These demands for accessibility all the time impose unreasonable expectations on faculty but further create a dynamic in which professors who are not accessible all the time are seen as underperforming. True across professional sites, women's ability to 'work after work' can be a source of tension—professionally and personally. Lengthy conference days followed by networking events, regular travel to academic workshops and conferences, and the 'on-call' nature of regular email communication expectations with students and colleagues mean that personal time is very limited and must be deliberately carved out.

The experience of working after work is not unique to academia—or to female academics—but it is part of the increasingly competitive locus of expectation placed on academics. 'Conference seasons' as a summer set of meetings after teaching obligations ended have morphed into an ongoing set of conference attendance expectations throughout the year. The type and frequency of these dissemination activities are measured and weighed, compared to the type and frequency of attendance of colleagues or potential hires. As such the 'voluntary' nature of conference participation is anything but voluntary; networking during these events is similarly expected in order to make the connections for future invitations and collaborations. For partial, external, or part-time academics, this is primarily also done without financial support and, for some, by using vacation days from the full-time (non-academic) position to attend academic events.

All of these factors influence whether feminism can be done in higher education without disadvantage to the feminist scholar. The 'success' of the feminist scholar is always already in tension with the corporate demands of higher education, reduced or limited stable faculty positions, inherently male-dominated institutional environments, and short- and long-term negative impacts based on 'being' feminist.

Success within these constraints becomes decreasingly possible. Solutions that have been suggested to integrate feminist endeavors and reward female scholars to the same degree as male scholars include promotion of feminist causes through, that is, social media and awareness-raising (David 2014). The reality for many, however, is continued impermanence or abandoning academic pursuits altogether.

Personal Narrative: Failure as an Academic (and the Advice I've Received)

I had said at the outset of this chapter that I would include personal reflections as someone who maintains an academic profile (of some sort) outside of my full-time employment: in the academic model of success and failure, this is a narrative about my failure as an academic. And it is also a narrative about why it is long past the time for professors and institutions to consider doctoral candidates to be more than just 'professors in waiting.' My reflections here can certainly encompass countless experiences by peers and colleagues—academic or otherwise. However, being in the role that I am has provided me with unexpected insight regarding the 'system' of academia and the impositions on scholars, feminist or not, to churn out that which is considered worthwhile by institutional measurements. Having said that, maintaining any form of academic profile outside a full-time job is at once a choice and an ongoing experience of failure.

As is true of many of my peers, I continue to work after work—which means working evenings and weekends as well as full workdays since I completed my PhD and began working postdoctorate in 2010. While I want to be clear that doing so is in fact a choice that I have made to maintain a research profile, it is at the same time very clearly required if I am to hope for any chance of transitioning into a faculty position. I am not the only person who is in this position, and certainly this volume is comprised of scholars who are working all the time as well. But there is a personal impact that results from dedicating so much time to *unpaid* work, and the impact is difficult to quantify. There are financial measures, personal, relational, and professional impacts, but there is a measure that

is much harder to ascertain, and the questions this volume seeks to address move toward that difficulty—it is the sense that not having transitioned into a faculty role, in and of itself, is academic failure. Regardless of the lists of publications, the ‘value’ of dissemination venues, and the numbers of citations, the only goal that is discussed in PhD programs, the only measure of success that is truly pinpointed, is the ability to secure a full-time faculty position. This in and of itself renders me a failure in the academic sphere, which, for myself and others in similar positions, makes the question ‘why am I even doing this?’ particularly resonant.

Having now been in this position for several years, and having completed another graduate degree during this time of maintaining both a full-time non-academic position and research profile, I have returned to an early question I asked myself before I began my PhD: do I even want to be a full-time professor? What is it that I think I will gain from that position and what is it that I have to be willing to admit to myself if I do not ever become a full-time professor? As I have witnessed the increasing rigidity of measures of success being imposed on academics, and the fight that feminist scholarship must continue to undertake to recognize feminist endeavors *as* successful, I have had to ask myself whether I truly want to be a professor or whether I feel that’s the only way to achieve ‘success.’ I had no intention of heading toward academia when I began my PhD and instead (after many discussions with my MA supervisor) had decided that it was worth pursuing because I had a topic that I was passionate about and the luxury of being able to do so (acceptance in the program and a scholarship). But once I was in the PhD program, the only career trajectory that was discussed upon completion of the degree was the tenure-stream faculty position. It seems unlikely at this juncture that PhD programs will begin seeing doctoral candidates as much more than ‘possible professors’; however, the systemic disadvantage these measurements place on their once and future students are of critical importance. As a feminist partial academic, I benefit from existing outside the academic system in a way many of my peers do not. My job performance is not tied to the same scale. As such, I am permitted a particular freedom in what I choose to undertake.

But being a female within an academic environment has other negative implications. The way females are treated within higher education—as

'less than' males, assumed administrators, infantilized for their views or commonly assumed to be students (thereby not being recognized as 'real' academics)—has a personal impact on one's experience of the work environment. Well-meaning female mentors frequently offer advice based on their own experiences. Some of the advice I have received over the years includes suggestions to dress formally,⁷ regardless of whether that tenured male professor in your department teaches in shorts and golf shirts; wear high heels, so that you are not in a position to have to look 'up' to anyone; to avoid reading the comment portions of teaching evaluations, providing personal examples of the negative gender-related comments they received over the years. I was told at the first ever international conference I attended that the best thing I could do was to vocally disagree with a panelist during the Q and A session, as that was a great way for young female scholars to 'get noticed.'

As I say, this advice is well intentioned and is based on the experiences of other female and feminist scholars. It does make me wonder what advice junior male scholars are given about their clothing, their height, or how to 'get noticed.' But it also leads me to question the very space where I first began engaging in feminist academic pursuits—if in fact that space is at the same time so hostile toward female and feminist endeavors.

Which leads back to whether (and how) feminist pursuits within the neo-liberal institution are possible. And if they are, how are they possible? Engagement in social media dialogue and awareness-raising provides spaces for feminist activism and importantly for feminist voices and vocalizations. But whether these spaces combat the corporatization of academic 'performance' is unclear.

Concluding Thoughts

The backlash to feminism in and of itself with academia raises serious questions about whether feminism can challenge the neo-liberal university. Choosing to engage in spaces, dialogues, and collective endeavors regardless of the 'value' ascribed to them poses an ongoing pushback to the ranking system; whether it ultimately disadvantages the ability for feminists to secure more stable and prestigious career roles is perhaps at

once the concern about engaging and the reason to engage in feminist endeavors.

Women's achievements continue to be dismissed or attributed to male influences, regardless of the institutionalization of gender equality rights or the implementation of gender and women's studies in higher education. The ongoing disavowal of the work produced by women is compounded by negative associations made toward feminist academics unrelated to work outputs.

Within a neo-liberal framework, the value that is attributed to competition, prioritization of types of publications, and the requirement of production and accessibility at all times is directly antithetical to being or producing feminist endeavors within the institutions. The result is what this volume is exploring: fights, flights, or failures. Feminist spaces are hard won, and their ability to foster an environment of feminist productivity is hampered by the overarching impositions of the institution, in addition to limited access to stable faculty. As an alternative, flight from higher education, which at once also signals academic failure, means highly trained individuals who would be a benefit to higher education become located elsewhere—to the detriment of higher education overall.

Notes

1. Objections to women's and gender studies programs have primarily focused on the notion that these programs exclude the study of men and masculinity. Although that is not necessarily true, many programs examine gender across multiple intersections, in particular, beyond male/female binaries; however others have argued the need to create women's studies programs has been precisely because of the oversight of female roles across departments and programs. Increasingly, men's rights activists, however, have argued that they are discriminated against in the 'feminist institution,' see, for example, Teitel (2013).
2. Rosalind Franklin's pioneering work led to the discovery of the molecular structures of DNA, though her role was predominantly unrecognized until after her death. James Watson and Francis Crick took credit for the discovery in 1953, although their work was based on Franklin's own

- yet-to-be-published research—which was shared without her knowledge (Worthen 2016).
3. Margaret Keane’s now infamous experience of art fraud at the hands of husband, Walter Keane, saw Walter taking credit for her paintings for decades until she finally revealed the truth to a reporter in 1970. Their case ended up in court when Margaret sued Walter; she was finally recognized for her art when the judge challenged both Walter and Margaret to paint one of the ‘big-eyed children’ that Walter Keane had become famous for—and he failed (Ronson 2014).
 4. Corey Cogdell-Unrein’s bronze medal performance at the Rio Olympics in 2016 was quickly overshadowed when media outlets, the Chicago Tribune and others, posting stories about her medal without referring to her by name, and instead only referencing her in relation to her husband and NFL player for the Chicago Bears. Media outlets referred to Cogdell-Unrein solely as ‘the wife’ of an NFL player, subsuming her professional successes under the name and profession of her husband (Lombardo 2016). The lack of recognition of female athletes is a widespread issue, facing women in multiple sporting venues. For more see Cambridge University Press (2016) online: <http://www.cambridge.org/about-us/news/aest/>
 5. <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/New-Report-Looks-at-the-Status-of-Women-in-Higher-Education.aspx>
 6. Canada has 98 accredited universities but securing an accurate count of colleges is a bit more difficult; not all colleges are accredited and some are private. Ontario alone has 24 colleges, but it is difficult to get a final count across the country.
 7. I had a female student in one of the first courses I taught tell me at the end of the semester that she was really pleased with the way I taught the sexuality studies course because when she saw me the first day she thought, based on my attire, that I must be ‘a prude.’ I frequently wonder whether male professors are on the receiving end of these kinds of comments.

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Feminist Conference Time: Aiming (Not) to Have Been There

Emily F. Henderson

Turning Towards Feminist Conferences¹

If you think back to the last conference you attended, did you have something on standby to do in case you attended a session and realised that you were not interested in the papers? How did you decide when to do it or what to do? If you did take up an alternative activity, did you feel a sense of relief at unexpectedly getting something done, of having gained time? How far did the temptation reach—how far did it outweigh your potential interest in the paper—how long did you wait before picking it up? Did you, on the other hand, have something that you had to do during that paper, such as finish your own paper, which you would give in the next session, or deal with a work matter that had a deadline in the next hour? Did you hope that your activity would go unnoticed and that, should there be anything of interest, you would pick up on it anyway? You may of course have intended to sit through the session and listen, to take the time to be there and forget all of the things to do; you deserved a break from the whirlwind, you needed some thinking input for

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your work, to take your ideas elsewhere. But who is to say that you were able to remain in the room? You may have been as elsewhere as the other people there who were unexpectedly getting things done or who had to get things done, your thoughts borne back towards your desk or inbox...

These reflections will provide you with some of your own material to work with as you read through this theorisation of feminist conference time. My conference study took place at three national women's studies association conferences—in the UK (Feminist and Women's Studies Association (FWSA) Biennial Conference 2013), the USA (National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) Annual Conference 2013), and India (Indian Association for Women's Studies (IAWS) Triennial Conference 2014). The most common question addressed to me in relation to this research project is, 'Why conferences?' For conferences are often referred to in social networking and the press, and indeed in some academic literature, by sheepish and scathing academics and nonacademics alike, as worthy of mockery—they are a waste of money and time, they are excuses for protected, sofa-cushion-residing dons to take a free holiday in a luxury resort, for students to indulge in binge-drinking and romantic flings, possibly with their professors. Academics and proto-academics know they have to go to them, but often they wonder why, and in conversation cynical accounts prevail about 'gaining the CV line', being bored silly by unprepared or unrelated presentations, and taking time out to see the local attractions. However I argue that conferences are, despite all the dismissive bad press, (which is nonetheless at times accurate), respectable sites for empirical research (Henderson 2015). On the one hand, they represent trends of higher education research, such as globalisation, technologisation, professionalisation, marketisation. On the other hand, as sites where people come together for a form of dissemination that cannot fully hide behind the printed word, where bodies meet names, where professional relationships and hierarchies become tangled up with toilets, meals, and discos, conferences provide an excellent opportunity to study the informalities of the academic profession which tend to hide, as Gill (2010) has noted, in the corridors of higher education institutions.

The study as a whole was a theorisation of gender knowledge production using conferences as the site (Henderson 2016), but in this chapter

I want to concentrate on discourses of time that emerged in my interviews with participants from the three conferences. At each conference, in addition to ethnographic and autoethnographic observation and document analysis, I recruited approximately ten delegates to participate in analysis and discussion at and after the conferences. I was also able to conduct a preliminary interview with the majority of my participants before the conferences. The conditions of my presence at the IAWS conference did not allow for this, so these participants participated in one interview on Skype after the conference. While time was not the focus of my analysis of these interviews, I noticed that most interviews included some discussion of time, but these discussions happened in the subtext of comments about other matters (as was also the case in Guzmán-Valenzuela and Barnett 2013; see also Lahad 2012). In one example, an IAWS participant misunderstood my question ‘do you need a break’ (intended to check that she did not want to return to the interview later) as a question about her tiredness levels in general; she proceeded to analyse the multiple temporalities she had experienced over the two back-to-back conferences she had just attended. I also noticed that, while my questions and comments in the interviews were generally cautious and carefully considered, I unselfconsciously participated in asides about time and seemed to be validating certain discursive practices about academics’ time. In one instance, an IAWS participant described the work that awaited her on her return from the conference, stating that she would be ‘back to work with a vengeance’. Returning to the transcript some time after conducting the interview, I found that I had replied, ‘At least you’ve had a good break’. I am slightly disturbed to discern an implicit suggestion in my words. I seem to be saying, ‘You’re lucky to have a flexible job that allows you to travel and take a holiday afterwards. You shouldn’t complain about the administrative burden that is awaiting you on your return’. With this seemingly harmless remark, I was participating in the guilt economy that surrounds academia. This economy is in part responsible for the time-related behaviours at conferences that I theorise in this chapter: there is widespread informal recognition that conferences are a luxury, a holiday, and that they disrupt ‘real’ work.

Having sensitised myself to the normalised yet value-laden temporal discourses surrounding conferences, I mapped out the different

temporalities that govern conference experiences, to ask what conference attendees' involvement in these congruent temporalities means for the production and dissemination of knowledge, for the potential, or lack of potential, of academic conferences to constitute places of learning and inspiration, connection and collaboration (Burford and Henderson 2015; Burford et al. 2018). This chapter explores academic feminist conferences as confluence points where multiple, competing, affective temporalities collide. An FWSA participant stated in her interview, 'I was thinking, "I've travelled all this way, and I was looking forward to this, and my mind is somewhere else"'. This is just one example of the multiple temporalities that are experienced by feminist scholars when they make a break with the everyday and move their bodies to a conference; anticipation layered with bodily presence in the here and now, layered with ongoing and often future-oriented 'somewhere else'-ness. Drawing on analyses of changing academic temporalities in the neoliberal university, this chapter portrays feminist conferences as both feminist spaces for resistance and spaces which are not spared by neoliberal politics and processes. The chapter uses time as a concept which can help to explore the ways in which feminist academics' experiences of academia are shaped through different modes of presence, of *being there*, which are often lived simultaneously and which produce multiple, contradictory subjectivities. My theorisation of temporality at conferences feeds into wider debates around the academic profession about time pressure, performance culture, and accelerated productivity demands (see, e.g., Archer 2008; Burton 2018; Clegg 2010; Gibbs et al. 2015; Gonick 2018; Harris 2005; Meadhbh Murray 2018; Morrissey 2013).

Feminist Academic Conferences—An Escape from or to Neoliberal Academia?

In a book entitled *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University*, what place can a discussion of feminist conferences take up? Ostensibly, conferences take place outside of the university—at times in a spatial sense when they are located in conference centres and hotels and at other times

when they are hosted by universities but occur outside of the normal work patterns of academic life. In many discussions of neoliberalism in academia, the academic is depicted *in* their university, dealing with increasing surveillance and pressure with regard to teaching, research, and administration (Archer 2008; Harris 2005; Morrissey 2013). These portrayals of static academics are at odds with another set of discussions about neoliberal academia—namely, the literature on academic mobility. A number of research studies have focused on the heightened mobility practices of academics in contemporary academia, particularly within the Global North but also increasingly across North-South and South-South borders (Fahey and Kenway 2010a, b; Kim 2009, 2014; Maadad and Tight 2014). In these studies, the physical location of the home university appears as just one amongst numerous sites where academic work is taking place. In Parker and Weik's (2014) paper on frenetic academic mobility, airports take on the familiarity of an academic's office. In this chapter, then, I use academic conferences as a means of analysing the ways in which academics who are temporarily distanced from their university experience this mobility as both a break from and a continued experience of the neoliberal university.

It can be argued that feminist conferences are particularly important spaces for feminist academics. While conferences often have the function of developing a research field and a researcher's position within that field (Becker 2014; Chen et al. 2012; Gross and Fleming 2011; Hoyt and Whyte 2011), feminist conferences are layered with an additional role of bringing together scholars whose work is marginalised within the mainstream (Krishna 2007). They are thus spaces where feminist alliances are formed, where feminist politics is contested and enacted, and where different forms of feminism are constituted or dismissed as 'proper knowledge' (Pereira 2012; see also McWilliams 2000). In this sense, feminist conferences can be experienced as an *escape from* neoliberal academia, where politicised feminist research and teaching is often frowned upon (unless it can be repackaged within the 'impact' agenda; cf Pereira 2015). Accounts of the history of feminism sometimes use conferences as 'bookends' in the field (Stryker 2006, p. 2), such as the 1982 conference in Toulouse which is seen as an important marker for the institutionalisation of feminist studies in France (Chevalier and Planté 2014;

Kandel 2001) or the 2014 conference at Université Paris 7 which was seen as an important moment for incorporating intersectionality theory into French feminism (Falquet and Kian 2015). Furthermore, several participants from my study referred to feminist conferences where feminist conference pedagogy (Saul 1992) was employed to create a collegial and inspirational space, where activism and academia intermingled and reinvigorated feminist ideas and practices and where lifelong friendships and writing partnerships were formed.

In spite of these positive representations of feminist academic conferences, where we might lay emphasis on *feminist*, these conferences are nonetheless still *academic* conferences. It is clear from the previous paragraph that feminist conferences can to a certain extent resist the structures and strictures of neoliberal academia, constituting a welcome escape for feminist academics and a valuable space for feminist thinking. However, conferences are also portrayed in the literature and indeed by my research participants as reproducing many of the characteristics of higher education institutions. There are obvious leakages between conference spaces and universities, when job interviews are held at conferences (this happens at NWSA conferences) or when, at a more implicit level, conference delegates investigate forthcoming job opportunities. Academic conferences also reproduce the power-play and hierarchical practices of universities; Lewis (2013, p. 881) analyses conferences as ‘organisational space[s]’ and ‘temporary institutions’ which replicate the competitive and hierarchical inclusions and exclusions of universities (see also Ahmed 2012). Some of this challenge emerges from the age-old debates around the institutionalisation of women’s studies in academia (Bowles 1983; Brown 2008)—in order for feminists to succeed in carving out a space for feminist knowledge in academia, are we required to replicate the techniques of the mainstream? And is this always one compromise too many? Bell (1987, p. 74) refers to the ‘tyranny of traditional formats’ at conferences, where ‘knowledge is reified through the hierarchical structure of podium and auditorium’—feminist conferences which replicate traditional conference structures are sites where the institutionalisation drive and the feminist reworking of knowledge production collide in an intense, localised, embodied manner (Caughie and Pearce 2009; Stanley 1995). A frustrated colleague referred to what she referred to as the ‘dick

swinging' that occurs at academic conferences (anonymised Facebook post, April 2016); the traditional conventions of conferences may place feminist academics into the role of 'dick swingers' even if we resist exclusive and hierarchical practices in our research and teaching. As such, feminist academic conferences may be experienced less as an *escape from* and more of an ambivalent *escape to* the neoliberal university.

Arguably it is not just at the level of conference systems and conventions that feminist academic conferences are experienced as microcosms or reproductions of universities. It can also be suggested that the academic subjectivity of the academics who attend feminist conferences is resistant to—or incapable of—leaving the university behind. This line of argument suggests that academics bring the university with them to the conference, even if they deliberately try to do otherwise. In this argument, it is not just that there is a neoliberal university within which the academic is located; instead the academic's subjectivity is itself structured by the neoliberal university. Here we are broaching the idea that the subject may be fundamentally altered by the environment and practices of the neoliberal university (Gill 2010; Morley 2016) and furthermore that the subject may be unable to operate outside of those practices. As such, even 'feeling academic' outside of the university, for example, through the affective experience of a feminist academic conference, may be mediated through a subjectivity that is crafted within the neoliberal university (Leathwood and Hey 2009). The chapter now moves on to address this argument in more detail through the concept of time.

Time and Academic Subjectivity

The concept of time is frequently employed—though sometimes implicitly (Clegg 2010)—in analyses of neoliberal academic subjectivity to demonstrate changes to the nature of work and attitudes to work that are displayed by academics in the contemporary university. For example, time underpins the notions of performance and work plans in Morrissey's (2013) account of the normalised academic self that is constituted by neoliberal managerialist practices (see also Gonzales et al. 2013). Harris (2005) uses sped-up time to frame her analysis of shifts in academic iden-

tities caused by neoliberal policies: ‘individuals...must make decisions quickly in a world which is fast moving and constantly changing’ (p. 421). In her analysis, research projects and the results from these projects are being sped up by accountability requirements; institutions are forced to respond hastily to quickfire policy decisions, and these responses are imposed onto academics within institutions. This use of time is also employed in Mountz et al.’s manifesto ‘For slow scholarship’ (2015), which begins ‘The neoliberal university requires high productivity in *compressed time frames*’ (p. 1236, emphasis added). Participants who were on fixed-term contracts in Archer’s (2008) and Nikunen’s (2014) studies of early career researchers discussed the pressures placed on them in terms of time: the uncertainty of the future caused by the fixed duration of the contract was layered with the certainty of the everyday workload, which demanded a stretching of the working day into the weekends and evenings. Common to these accounts of the neoliberal university is a sense of time objectively speeding up and subjects having to speed up in order to ‘keep up’ (Pereira 2015).

While it is commonly recognised across these accounts that changes in the way that time is manifested in the neoliberal university are impacting on academic subjectivities, the relationship between time and subjectivity is conceptualised differently in different accounts. Different understandings of this relationship position time as more or less objective and external to subjects (see also Adam 2010; Leccardi 1999, 2005; Odih 1999). A spectrum of these understandings would position at one end objective, external time where subjects live by time but time is not affected by subjects; at the other end we would find a mutually constitutive intermingling of time and subjectivity (Lapping 2016). Analyses of academia that consider that time is objectively changing lie more at the former end, while a view that academic subjectivity is simultaneously constituted by and constitutive of time lie at the latter end of the spectrum. The aim of this section is to engage with multiple understandings of the relationship between time and subjectivity, in order to then move onto the next stage of the argument about the neoliberal university in relation to feminist conference time.

The *first understanding* of time that I address in this sequence is the ‘realist’ notion that time exists objectively, where ‘the continuous dura-

tion of time [is perceived] as a given' (Lapping 2016, p. 3). This form of time is also known as 'clock time' (Adam 2006; Adkins 2009; Lingard and Thompson 2017), and the implication is that time presses on regardless of the subjects that are living by it. As such, the relationship between temporality and subjectivity in this understanding of time is passive in nature, where time moves on in an inevitable, regimented manner, and the subject responds to time accordingly. Clock time in academia acts as an imposed reference point by which academics can be measured; it takes the form of 'timetables, targets, production rates, and deadlines' (ibid., §3.1). A clear example of the use of clock time in academia is the 'time allocation system' to which Nikunen (2014, p. 120) refers, where academics' time is slotted into an external, objectively quantified 'surveillance system'.

The clock time dimension of conferences is clearly evident in the structuring of conferences across a number of days and within those days a number of hours. In this sense, conferences are organised according to an externally imposed timescale with 'invariable hours' (Adam 2006, p. 123) that exists independently of the people who are occupying the conference space. There are of course moments where this timescale breaks down—where, for example, a conference is cancelled (Carpay 2001) or a speaker does not arrive (Ringrose 2010). However in general there is a sense of the inevitable pressing forward of an objectively constituted time. This was particularly evident at the IAWS conference, where the plenary stage was situated at a distance from the rooms where the parallel sessions were held, but the timetable did not allow for the 10–15 minute walk—as one participant remarked, this inflexibility of the timetable meant that she 'did miss a few [papers] and [she] arrived late'. This also occurred at the huge NWSA venue—a participant noted, 'I don't think I went to any panel that I wasn't late to'. In this understanding of time, conference time is objectively separate from the university; conference clock time is an *escape from* the university in the sense that it is an intense, temporary, discrete timescale. When I delivered a conference paper on being a 'proper delegate' (Henderson 2014), a member of the audience commented that when she attends conferences she enjoys yielding to conference clock time because she experiences the rigid timetable as a break from managing her own work and family time.

In the *second understanding* of conference time that I introduce here, the subject takes a more active, agentic role. In the first understanding, time was perceived as a ‘given’ that was external to the subject. In the second understanding, time is still seen in this way, but the focus moves to the way in which subjects adapt their behaviour to try to manage clock time. Here, then, time is ‘a given that is subjectively mediated through a consciousness that structures the subject’s experience of temporality’ (Lapping 2016, p. 3). This understanding of time in relation to academia is particularly relevant to analyses of ‘fast time’ (Guzmán-Valenzuela and Barnett 2013, p. 1120), or the speeding-up of work: ‘academics experience the pressures of clock time that materialize in academic workloads, with tasks compressed into time-frames’ (ibid., p. 1122). In this understanding of time, we find representations of academics as not having enough time or experiencing a ‘lack of time’ (ibid., p. 1125) and as developing strategies to manage this change in the objective time that structures their work. These strategies are referred to as ‘self-governing technologies’ (Nikunen 2014, p. 120) which involve attempts to effect the ‘subjugation of time to human will’ (Clegg 2010, p. 347). In this understanding of time, it is noteworthy that, despite the basic conceptual understanding of time as externally imposed, academics are represented as taking agency over clock time. They are ‘steal[ing] time’ from one activity to spend time on another (Guzmán-Valenzuela and Barnett 2013, p. 1127), engaging in ‘time markets’ where they are ‘trading periods of time’ (ibid., p. 1131) and ‘outsmarting time’ (Gonzales et al. 2013, p. 1107). In calling for ‘slow scholarship’, Mountz et al. (2015) employ the same understanding of time in their call for academics to take agency against these efficiency strategies in order to ‘make...time’ (ibid., p. 1247). They suggest that, ‘We must dare to relax our grip on time...throwing clocks, watches and iPhones over the housetops’ (ibid., p. 1246). In conference terms, this understanding of time plays out as a resistance to and strategic management of conference clock time, where delegates manage their conference experience between ‘following [their] own pace, allowing time to sort through the information [they]’ve taken in, and rushing from one session to the next so [they] won’t miss anything’ (Bell 1987, p. 74). In the next section of this chapter, I go on to show how many academics employ these strategies of time management in their conference attendance and how this shapes their experiences of conferences.

The *third understanding* of time that I present in this section involves a relationship where temporality and subjectivity are inextricably produced in and through each other. This version of temporality appears in Adkins' (2009) 'event time', where 'time does not operate externally to events but unfolds with events' (§4.4). Adkins posits that more individualised processes of labour and new types of commodities 'confound notions of clock time' (ibid., §4.1) and 'evade measure in clock time' (ibid., §4.3); in her analysis, 'time and phenomena are entirely entangled' (ibid.). Lapping (2016) enacts a similar theoretical manoeuvre but more explicitly centres on the subject, asking if temporality is in fact inherent to the possibility of the subject (and subjectivity to the possibility of temporality). Contrary to the 'realist' perspective outlined above, 'approaches [to time] that question the unity of the subject' (ibid., p. 3) implicate the ongoing process of subject formation as inimical to processes of time and vice versa. As such, the continuity of clock time is perceived as 'a construction that supports the fantasy of unified identity' (ibid.). While the second understanding of time positions the subject as having agency over clock time, the third understanding perceives that this agency is inimically produced by and productive of clock time and clock time likewise as produced by and productive of agency.

Lapping (2016) employs an interview excerpt from her study of academics' research practices to clarify the difference between a 'realist' analysis and an analysis that questions the role of the subject. The participant, who gives an account of working on a funded research project, contrasts the previous temporality of her working pattern ('things sort of unfold') with the temporality of the funded project, which necessitates 'a publication plan' (ibid., p. 4). The 'realist' understanding of time understands this scenario as a veritable change in objective time, where the researcher is now obliged to strategically manage a newly rigid relationship with the demands of the research funder, measured in clock time. The analysis that Lapping goes on to develop of this extract reconfigures this reading of the excerpt into an interrogation of the signification of the participant's account in terms of the relationship between subjectivity and temporality. As such, instead of reading the shift from 'things sort of unfold' to 'a publication plan' as a change in objective time, this shift is read as the *appearance* of a shift which is rooted in the interaction between structural and material forces that produce the subject (in a Deleuzian reading) and

in the relationship between unconscious desires and conditions of temporality (in a Lacanian reading). In terms of conference time, we might reframe the quotation from Bell (1987, p. 74) about delegates ‘following [their] own pace’ and then ‘rushing from one session to the next so [they] won’t miss anything’. Rather than understanding this quotation as evidence of conference participants taking agency over the clock time of the conference schedule, we can reframe the schedule and the participant as interlocked and located *within* the psyche of the subject. The schedule provides the participant with a concomitant sense of reassuring but restrictive structure and an opportunity to experience agency by resisting the schedule, both of which enact and contribute to the participant’s subjectivity. The schedule in turn only takes on significance once it is being adhered to or rebelled against by the subject.

Feminist Conference Time

Building on the three understandings of time that were introduced in the previous section, I now develop the theorisation of conference time by bringing together the discussion of feminist academic conferences as *escaping from* and *escaping to* the neoliberal university with notions of temporality and subjectivity. Once I had noticed the aforementioned in-passing references to time at conferences in my interview transcripts, I compiled these references in order to read across them. These included references to the timetable of the conference, to slotting the conference into the university timescales, to managing competing activities at the conference owing to competing timescales, to how conference delegates spent their time at the conferences. From these references, I identified two modes of being at the conferences, both of which involve a different temporality and both of which situate the conference in relation to *escaping from* and/or *to* the neoliberal university: (i) *being there* and (ii) *(not) having been there*. These two modes will now be expanded upon and evidenced, using the different theorisations of time that were set out in the previous section. For each mode, I set out how that mode can be understood using the three different understandings of time. As such, I set out *three understandings of time* for *two modes of being* at a conference. The

intention in doing so is to provide plural interpretations of conference time and to resist a single reading. I also wish to highlight the danger of only using the first two understandings of time in analyses of time in the neoliberal university—these understandings of time position the subject as external to and either passive to or as having agency over clock time. Strategies of resistance to time in academia that utilise these two understandings of time in fact employ the same tools as the forces they are resisting—particularly in feminist calls for academics to take agency by ‘making time’ for leisure and thinking. I argue that the third understanding of time—where time and subjectivity are intermingled at the level of subject formation is essential in rethinking feminist resistance to time in the neoliberal university. These modes—and the collision between them—therefore represent some of the tensions involved in occupying the subject position of ‘feminist academic’ (Pereira 2015; Thwaites and Pressland 2017).

Being There

The first temporal mode of conference attendance that I address here is the notion of *being there*, of being present in space and time, and of taking time to think and take stock, which is akin to the notion of ‘time off’ (Stein 2012). This mode, though pertinent for all conferences, is particularly relevant to feminist conferences, because of the importance of feminist conferences to feminist scholars whose work is marginalised within their universities. *Being there* involves deliberately not thinking about what awaits you when you return from the conference, so that you can fully participate in the conference. In Guzmán-Valenzuela and Barnett’s (2013) typology of academic temporalities, this mode constitutes ‘committed time’, that is, ‘an activity that offers a much greater level of satisfaction’ and ‘an investment of self’ (p. 1132). Two examples of *being there* are as follows:

In [the conference location] I was never checking my mails, I decided that I’m on sabbat[ical] from internet (IAWS participant).

The good thing about coming to conferences that are less centrally about what you work on is that it’s just nice sometimes to sit and listen to people,

and find out what they're doing, without having to worry about thinking, 'Oh, I need to quote this' [...] so I think I'm coming more in [...] a more kind of like, 'Let's see what happens' [way] (FWSA participant).

The *being there* references tended to focus on the decisions participants took about how they spent their time at conferences; practices of *being there* involved not checking emails and attending papers to 'sit and listen'. Other practices involved resisting the temptation to take useful notes, and deliberately choosing sessions that were not related to participants' current work, in order to discover new areas of feminist research and to think creatively. *Being there*, then, is associated with taking time to think, to engage with ideas, to leave space for 'something to happen'. This type of undisturbed time is commonly referred to in accounts of the neoliberal university as the precious time that is now too scarce: 'speeded up time has made time for reflection on...the part of staff...much less likely' (Clegg 2010, p. 358).

Being there can be framed in terms of clock time (the *first understanding*) as an *escape from* the neoliberal university. In clock time, *being there* can be viewed as a passive response to the objective timeframe of a certain number of days which are separated off from time spent at the university. In a linear conception of time, the conference participant is obeying the logic that states that the participant's body is away from the university for a set number of days, and is now within the conference space, and so should yield to the new timeframe: '[conference space] brackets out the rest of everything else that's happening in your life' (FWSA participant). The clock time understanding of *being there* relates to the comment made to one of my conference papers that I mentioned above—that the everyday cares and conflicting responsibilities can be put aside, arrangements having been made for the duration, and the conference participant can slot into the timetable that is provided for them.

In the *second understanding* of time, where academics try to manipulate time in order to make more time or work more efficiently, *being there* appears less as a passive, yielding mode, and more as a concerted effort to *be there* which may or may not work. We can take this understanding of *being there* as an example of 'making time' in order to resist the time demands of the neoliberal university. However it was clear that 'making

time' was a challenge. Several participants mentioned the difficulty of getting away for the full duration of the conference (because of work commitments and caring responsibilities), and it was clear that participants organised punishing schedules for themselves in order to attend as much of the conference as possible:

because I'm teaching right now I finish teaching my class on Thursday morning and then I'm flying Thursday night so I'll miss Friday so um I'll just have Saturday and Sunday (FWSA participant who travelled from the USA for the conference).

The effect of trying to protect time—in the clock time sense—for *being there* at the conference impacted upon participants' ability to *be there*: this participant commented that she 'was in a jetlagged stupor' during some of the papers she attended; I have already mentioned another participant who stated that she was unable to concentrate on the conference because she had been working so hard before leaving for the conference that her 'mind [was] somewhere else' (FWSA participant); one of my participants attended the LAWS conference and another conference with a few days of each other and as a consequence was unable to fully *be there* because there was 'too much to take in and too much to participate in'. In this understanding of time, then, some conference participants win against time and manage to craft an affectively embodied conference experience of *being there*, while others lose out on clock time and/or on the quality of *being there* that is attained.

In the *third understanding* of time, where subjectivity and temporality are intertwined, *being there* is perceived less as a period of objectively discrete time, less as a subject's personal struggle with that discrete period of time, and more as a feature of ongoing processes of subject formation in relation to temporality. In this understanding of conference time, *being there* is still viewed as a means of resisting the demands of the neoliberal university, but instead of an *escape from* the university, *being there* is shaped by an underlying but inescapable sense of the participant's *absence from* the university. *Being there* is characterised by protective practices that the participant engages in so as to 'outsmart time', but the time for *being there* that is produced from this outsmarting involves constantly warding

off the intrusions of the university. *Being there* is never achievable as an absolute, objective state, because academic time is not experienced as linear in a way that a few days can be marked out as ‘here, not there’. Instead, parallel, ‘complex, divergent, and not infrequently conflictual’ timeframes are occurring (Clegg 2010, p. 358), where the university continues regardless of conference participants’ absence; one participant received a call from a colleague while she was at the FWSA conference where the colleague told her, ‘Your desk is *loaded*’. Enacting a *being there* mode of conference attendance therefore requires the enforced forgetting, repression, or compartmentalisation of the parallel temporalities of the university. I argue that, far from being a passive mode of conference attendance (as it at first seemed with the clock time analysis), *being there* is an active mode not just of conference attendance but also of academic subjectivity formation. The clock time of the conference is experienced by the academic subject as a force to both obey and resist and that clock time takes on its significance in this interplay within the subject. The struggle within the subject in relation to a form of time that is seen as inevitable and yet manipulable is therefore arguably an extension of (rather than a break from) the wider processes of subjectification in the neoliberal university.

(Not) Having Been There

Having been there in conference clock time refers to a set, discrete period of time where the participant’s body needs to be in a particular location, and this is seen as the principal requirement. This mode of attendance results from a lack of engagement in the conference and/or commitments elsewhere (usually in the university) that outweigh the importance of the conference. A prime example of the *having been there* mode is in evidence in one of the comic strips from Cham’s ‘Piled Higher and Deeper’, where the PhD student and his supervisor discuss holidays:

PhD student: Any plans for the summer, Prof Smith?

Prof Smith: Yes, I’m going on vacation with my family. However, I’ll still be checking email every day, having regular conference calls and working on grant proposals while I’m there.

PhD student: Do you really want to go?

Prof Smith: I'd rather send one of my postdocs but my spouse won't let me.

(Cham 2014)

In this interaction, Prof. Smith intends to go on holiday in a *having been there* mode, where, as long as a body is seen to take up the place of holiday-goer (even if it is in fact a postdoc rather than Prof. Smith), the holiday *will have been* taken and the 'spouse' *will have been* appeased. That Prof. Smith has no intention of *being there* on holiday does not seem of concern. This comic strip, which seems to also include a nod to conferences and the tendency for busy professors to send their juniors to give their papers in their place, is an illustration of the *having been there mode* where conference time is taken to be a discrete period of time in which the body (and only the body) needs to be outside of the university, but *being there* at the conference is either not desirable or not possible. In this section, I deal with both explanations for *having been there*. Where *being there* is not possible, I refer to a type of *having been there* that is modulated as *not having been there*.

Where *being there* is undesirable, *having been there* refers to the conference experience that is lived for the gains it *will have brought*. In this mode, participants' conference behaviour is shaped primarily by the desire to *already* have gained what they need to gain from the conference, without having to fully *be there* at the conference. This mode is characterised by, for example, the desire to present at a conference almost solely to *have gained* the CV line, where attending the rest of the conference is perceived as unnecessary or uninteresting. *Having been there* is explicitly a future-oriented mode of conference attendance, where the future is 'ready and waiting to be filled with the competitive endeavours of individuals' (Clegg 2010, p. 349). This mode of conference temporality is perhaps less inimical to feminist conferences, because of the political and affective connections that bring feminist scholars out of our universities and into feminist conference spaces. However, while it may be rarer for this mode to characterise a participant's feminist conference experience as a whole, there is no doubt that moments of the conference may be experienced in this way.

Where *being there* is rendered impossible by commitments elsewhere (probably in the university) that outweigh the importance of the conference, the *not having been there* mode refers to the expectation that the conference participant will be able to return home seemingly without having interrupted normal work patterns, having kept up with emails, for example. Participants who attend conferences (or parts of conferences) in this mode use every possible opportunity to ‘get work done’ during the conference. This mode of conference attendance reflects Guzmán-Valenzuela and Barnett’s (2013, p. 1130) inclusion of conferences in a set of ‘invisible’ academic activities which are not directly available to surveillance by the university and as such are ‘sources of suspicion’. Because conferences are not necessarily counted as bona fide activities by neoliberal universities, academics are often expected to continue with institutional commitments as if they were still in their offices. Furthermore, other commitments with different timeframes (such as research funding deadlines) roll on irrespective of conferences, just as conferences roll on irrespective of other activities; as a result, academics exist ‘on the edge of time, as decisions about the use of time-moments have to be made’ (ibid., p. 1123). I set out some of these decision-making processes about ‘time-moments’ at the start of this chapter, in my invitation to readers to think about distractions and temptations they experienced at the last conference they attended.

The passivity to time that is embedded in the *first understanding* of time is not in evidence in the *(not) having been there* mode. There is some sense of an externally imposed clock time in the sense of the body relocating for the duration of the conference, but in the *(not) having been there* mode even this prerequisite is eroded by practices such as participants only attending for the day—or half day—of their presentations or sending a junior scholar in their place. *(Not) having been there*, then, is overwhelmingly characterised by the *second understanding* of time, where the agentic subject perceives the conference schedule as fully manipulable.

The *having been there* mode therefore moves from the clock time understanding of conference time to the subject ‘outsmarting time’ (the *second understanding*) when we begin to ask what conference participants do with the few days that their bodies are outside of the university. The clearest example of *having been there* being linked with the undesirability

of *being there* at the conference was given by a participant who referred to some of her friends who attended NWSA but whose primary disciplinary affiliation was not women's studies:

They all felt like it was not their conference so when they got there they sort of rolled in late, they weren't there for the whole time [...] they were there to present their papers to get the CV line—like I talked about how I felt like [...] I was kind of half present, [...] they were probably like a quarter present (NWSA participant).

The participant here refers to a minimal conference attendance of 'a quarter present', which was owing to the fact that these conference participants did not view *being there* at the conference as necessary or desirable—she went on to recount the long lunches, dinners, and late nights that constituted 'a vacation for them'. In this account, the conference participants appear to strategically perform a minimal presence at the conference ('a quarter present') while 'outsmarting' the time that their bodies have to *be there* by using it as a holiday. The issue of conferences as holidays appeared in other places in my interviews. For example, an IAWS participant remarked that

especially the conferences happening in India, I think um [laughs] the primary agenda of at least half the people is to um you know do the sight-seeing, the traditional sight-seeing of the place.

This was particularly in evidence at the IAWS conference that I researched, as it was held in Guwahati, Assam, in the North-East region of India. While the conference was deliberately held in that region to improve feminist academics' knowledge of the region, which is overlooked by feminists from other regions of India (Deka 2014; Sen 2014), this also meant that many conference participants also wanted to use the time that they were in Guwahati to explore the area. I was surprised to find that a local tourism company had set up a stand at the conference for trips of up to two days that were being run for conference delegates (and that delegates were indeed enrolling for) during this four-day conference. There seemed to be a contradiction within the conference, where as previ-

ously mentioned the timetable was packed full but where the conference seemed to condone or even encourage participants to use the conference period to see the region.

The activities listed by Prof. Smith as holiday activities ('checking email everyday, having regular conference calls, and working on grant proposals') are clear examples of *not having been there*, where *being there* is impossible (even if desirable) because of other work commitments that outweigh the importance of the conference (or part of the conference). During the ethnographic parts of my fieldwork, I encountered participants who missed parts of the conference in order to: work on research grants; continue with ongoing fieldwork activities (for a participant who lived near the conference location); use the presence of multiple research partners at the conference to hold a meeting; work on their presentation at the conference in order to not have taken time out of institutional commitments before the conference; take a number of slots on the schedule per day to answer emails; and deal with other administrative tasks remotely. One of the NWSA participants, a PhD student, stated in her post-conference interview, 'So I didn't really do so much networking but I probably would have had I not had like midterms [coursework] and stuff due'—she had not managed to finish the work she needed to before leaving, so spent much of the conference working according to the coursework timescale of her university, rather than the timescale of the conference. While the *having been there* mode includes the potential to use conference clock time to *escape from* the neoliberal university by taking a break or short vacation, *not having been there* is the clearest manifestation of an *escape to* the neoliberal university: perhaps the body has escaped the university buildings, but the time spent at the conference is devoted to limiting the damage of this escape vis-à-vis the university.

The second understanding of time, where the subject takes agency over clock time, is undeniably pertinent to practices of (*not*) *having been there*, but I now reframe that pertinence as more complex than the second understanding would have us believe. In the *third understanding* of time, as with the third understanding of time applied to the *being there* mode, all practices of *having been there* (whether because *being there* is undesirable or impossible) are linked with *escaping to* rather than *from* the university. Here the relationship between the subject and temporality has a

different quality to the *being there* mode. Although the period of the conference is experienced as a discrete set of days where the body needs to be at the conference, the ways in which a participant enacts (*not*) *having been there*—whether for the whole or moments of the conference—are inimically bound up with processes of academic subject formation. Part of what we see here (for *having been there*) is a breaking down of boundaries between work and leisure, where a vacation is taken under the guise of (and embedded psychologically and physically in) work; for (*not*) *having been there* we see a breaking down of the temporal and spatial boundaries that designate particular chunks of clock time for particular activities.

It is also possible to interpret ways in which academics make valuations of their time and what it is worth them spending their time on, at a deeper level. These value judgements are particularly evident at conferences where many sessions have a tiny audience because speakers only attend their own sessions. I have informally heard this behaviour dismissed as unprofessional and uncollegial (see also Thompson et al. 2012), but I argue that it is a practice that does not result solely from the academic subject's agentic decision-making process about the value of their time. Echoing Guzmán-Valenzuela and Barnett (2013, p. 1122), I argue that this type of criticism comes from the fact that an 'agentic sense of time' is being privileged in understandings of time in the neoliberal university. Instead, I locate these apparently agentic decisions in a psychosocial interplay of time and subjectivity, where the subject constructs clock time as external to it and then engages in practices of resistance and/or 'outsmarting' in relation to that construction of clock time. Analyses of the neoliberal university often use the *second understanding* of time, by portraying time itself as speeding up and altering, and academic subjects as trying to take agency over and manage changes in time. I argue however that, instead of asking questions about time and how to resist it, we need to ask more questions about subjectivity and its construction of and by time (the *third understanding*). If we step back from viewing time as an objective force that subjects respond to, we can rethink this relationship by imagining not just subjects responding to time but time responding to (and being constructed by) subjects. In this argument, there is no objective, external time—there is only the time that makes us and that we construct.

This argument has implications for the way we view resistance to time in the neoliberal university, which is a key feminist project (Mountz et al. 2015; Pereira 2015). While I do not doubt that formulating practices for taking more leisure and making time to think and feel is a necessary and worthy strategy for survival in a high-pressure work environment, I also argue that formulating these practices using the second understanding of time misses an important element. For if academic subjectivity is bound up in constructing time as a given and constructing subjectivity as agentic over time, then the same processes of (potentially exhausting) subjectification are involved in making time for thinking (*being there*) and leisure (*having been there*) as are involved in making extra time for work (*not having been there*). In this sense, there is no veritable *escape from* the neoliberal university. I argue that a feminist project of resistance to the neoliberal university needs a theorisation of time as constituting of and constituted by subjectivity to underpin our resistance, in order to avoid replicating neoliberal subjectification strategies.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided an introduction to feminist conference time. However it is important to note that, owing to the scope of the chapter, various complexities of conferences have not been covered here. For example, some of my participants were involved in organising the conferences, because of roles within the associations in question. This added an extra layer of time management to the conference, where participants described their experience as ‘manic’ (FWSA participant) and as lacking in time (‘I guess I will sleep’, NWSA participant; ‘I had almost no time’, IAWS participant). A second, vital aspect of conferences to consider in more depth is the break in the home as well as the work routine and the applicability of *being there* and (*not*) *having been there* to the home routine. Some participants minimised the amount of time spent away in order to reduce the need for childcare and pet-care arrangements; others brought their partners and/or children with them. Others returned home to find a ‘shit show’ (NWSA participant) because the routine had been disrupted.

In this introduction to conference time, then, I have highlighted the importance of thinking about feminist conferences as spaces where feminist scholars need to *be there*—for the sake of their work, friendships, and the field—and yet I have also shown that conferences are spaces where participants may be unwilling and/or unable to *be there* for all or part of the conference, even while their bodies are in situ. I have situated this argument within a broader framing of the ways that the affective and embodied experiences of conferences are mediated through conference time. I have theorised conference time as involving three understandings of time (*firstly* clock time and the passive subject; *secondly* the subject outsmarting clock time; *thirdly* the subject as produced by and producing clock time) and two modes of being at a conference (*being there* and (*not*) *having been there*), which were then articulated through the three understandings of time. The intention of this theorisation was to provide multiple readings of conference time, which could also be reapplied to other timescales and activities within academic practice. The second intention was to put forward an argument that speaks to wider analyses of time within the neoliberal university—in particular, to highlight the pertinence of the third understanding of time to the feminist project of resisting time pressure in the neoliberal university. While conferences provided the vehicle for this argument, as a clear instance of embodied displacement from (and yet continued locatedness within) the university, it is hoped that this argument could be extended to less clearly defined ‘compartments’ of academic work.

Note

1. This chapter has been developed from a paper entitled ‘The Future-Oriented Conference Experience: Aiming (Not) to Have Been There’, which was presented at the ‘Futures in Question’ conference at Goldsmiths in September 2014. Some of the ideas in this paper were subsequently developed in discussions in the Time and the Subject reading group—I am very grateful for these rich discussions.

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Navigating the Emotional Landscapes of Academia: Queer Encounters

Yvette Taylor

Introduction: Emotionally (Dis)Engaged in University

In this chapter I consider processes of being (and becoming) on the academic map and the emotional disjunctures across time and place felt in occupying academia, in conducting research and in moving through intersecting spaces of teaching-research. The promise of entering and achieving in higher education is at once seductive (CVs produced, academic stars circulated internationally) and disturbing, felt and encountered across the university environment via administrative, teaching and research concerns. These points of arriving, departing and travelling through institutional space intersect with what I *feel* about occupying academia. The emotional stickiness of these contexts contrasts with the vision of the engaged, inclusive institution that now welcomes all through its door, with this rhetoric of arrival and belonging effacing starting points, varied journeys, different labours and divided recognitions. These are emotional

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Y. Taylor, K. Lahad (eds.), *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University*, Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64224-6_4

matters manifest in teaching and research encounters, where a critical pedagogy may be read as a failure, mobilised by the angry, emotional feminist academic, rather than her neutral objective rational unemotional counterpart. In arguing for an emotional presence constituted in and through teaching and research, I consider the emotional landscape of class and sexuality in particular, asking what is taken with us as we travel through academia, where feminist research in particular has been critical of the travelling subject (or 'self'), who tells only their own story.

Here, I highlight intersecting spaces of teaching-research, where certain subjects are made to stand-in for university—and city—commitment to equality, to signal a 'diversity' and regenerative capacity. The neo-liberal university is increasingly a site that demands a mobility of practice and an entrepreneurial orientation to local-global markets (Ong 2006); the academic is encouraged to extend her reach, to reach out to 'diverse communities' and to do so as a responsive-responsible engaged subject. These processes efface the material and affective labour and vulnerability in 'coming up against' blockages (or 'coming out'¹), which means the queer researcher-teacher gets 'stuck' (Ahmed 2004). The emotional stickiness of these contexts contrasts with the vision of the engaged, inclusive institution that now welcomes all through its door, with this rhetoric of arrival and belonging effacing starting points, varied journeys, different labours and divided recognitions. I am not seeking to pursue a vision of the authentic teacher-researcher to be liberated in taking up more space with her identity now recognised and validated; rather, as with queer anti-racist and feminist intersectional scholars in particular, I aim to highlight that class and sexuality get stuck on particular research-teaching subjects (Kuntsman and Miyake 2008; Haritaworn 2011; Douglas et al. 2011; Ahmed 2011). In re-engaging the senses (and a sense of higher education), researchers and teachers have a responsibility to rethink who they talk to and travel with.

Class and sexuality weigh heavily in the classroom and in the spaces, which the engaged university/researcher must increasingly take up, travel through and impact upon, if they are to prove their diverse and distinctive capacity. But class and sexuality constitute blockages where some more than others bear the weight of this labour, in coming up against normative institutional structures and in endlessly 'coming out' as queer (Ahmed 2009, 2012; Tauqir et al. 2011; Taylor 2012b). There is work to

be done in the queering of these processes, beyond the individual uptake of space, self-telling or self-recognition (which ‘coming out’ implies even as it is often blocked). Academic freedom has been understood as liberation, an ability to articulate and to know, but these different blockages, as a heightened part of the neo-liberal university, necessitate a different way of speaking back. This chapter constitutes an attempt to do exactly that: to articulate and navigate the emotional landscapes of academia, combining autoethnographic stories of professional and personal passions and pains. As emotions and ‘being emotional’ sticks to particular bodies—and in contrast constitutes movement for the reflexive, aligned properly affecting researcher—I hope to start, rather than end, with these stories and to ask if these are also recognised as yours.

We are encouraged to self-recognise in academia, to enact career mobility via our CVs, bound to academic identities, rather than to social justice actions (Tauqir et al. 2011). Academic entrance, career mobility and institutional rewards often imply a recognition, even arrival, within higher education, where objective success may be measured through increased publications, grant income and institutional visits, producing the ‘international’ academic able to take up her space. This is something we are encouraged to celebrate as a successful example of meritocratic promise and rational paths followed and sustained. Yet even our ‘successes’ are emotionally fraught, negotiated through educational environments which shape the boundaries of being (or becoming) on the academic map (Askins 2009; Haritaworn 2011; Taylor and Allen 2011). There are emotional disjunctures across time and place felt in occupying academia, in conducting research and in moving through intersecting spaces of the university and the city. The ‘engaged university’ is increasingly positioned as a regenerator of city capital, publics and participation, requiring the researcher to step out into place: I outline the ways that an emotional misfit to place occurs in teaching and in research, where the latter is sometimes positioned as remedy to and/or freedom from the neo-liberal university (Back 2007; Taylor 2010a; Taylor and Addison 2011). The engaged researcher cannot just ‘come out’ and be herself.

But, to repeat, these disjunctures amount to more than personalised underscoring of the gap between ‘academia’ and ‘me’, as more than simply an extension of space/self-hood. Here I consider the classed and sexual (dis)connects in academic occupations, wrestling with becoming and

being stuck in affecting different research and teaching presences. I want to consider this wrestling in relation to research and teaching experience of higher education, my work on queer and class and in relation to a recent project *Fitting Into Place: Class and Gender Geographies and Temporalities*² (Taylor 2012a); using these examples, I question the place of a queer presence inside and beyond academia (Binnie 2011; Taylor 2011a). Ahmed (2004) asks ‘what do emotions *do*?’, rather than what emotions *are*, exploring how these circulate between bodies as affective forms of reorientation, allowing structures and spaces to be reified and naturalised as subjects ‘feel their way’. Feminist attachments, queer feelings, and feelings of pain, anger, disgust and shame circulate between bodies, amidst intuitions, negotiated too by students-teachers-researchers. Here I consider the role of emotions in and across the spaces of my life as an academic with academic occupations (teaching and researching) positioned as affective encounters which reproduce certain presences and publics and block others as absent, off the map, or as stuck in their own unreflexive (angry) identity (Ahmed 2004; Tolia-Kelly 2010).

Although the academic may find herself in between (in)visibility and (mis)recognition, it is important to situate personal-profession ‘travels’ *in* research and teaching contexts, rather than apart from these and dislocated from their (and my own) production. I consider the role of emotions in and across the spaces I inhabit as an academic: these intersecting presences/absences across different parts of my life produce feelings about being in and out of place (see Kuntsman and Miyake 2008³).

My concern is in making visible varied stories as well as the absence of (legitimate) tales, where the feelings and places of privilege can also be made evident in such articulations and silences (Taylor 2009), rather than solely through a tale of personalised advantage/disadvantage. Although identifying as working class and ‘queer’⁴ in academia is a fraught, emotive and challenging process (Binnie 2011), such challenges can never fully be achieved or completed as (only) mine if the potential to situate claims beyond the personal (and beyond identity) is taken seriously. In a new context of higher education, institutions are now producing guidelines on ‘dealing with’ diversity, promising to be inclusive, welcoming places, where a ‘happy diversity’ sits alongside a capitalization upon this, as an institutional return reliant on certain bodies being present. This is heightened in the current UK educational climate⁵ where elite institutions may

now be in the curious position of marketing their own 'elitism' *and* 'diversity', while post-1992 institutions are positioned as failing to deliver on what is now a strange brand of diverse elitism (Taylor 2011b, 2012b). There are various institutional confidences and concerns here, which mobilise sentiments and subjects 'out of place', to convey how various others have arrived and are supposedly happily included (Ahmed 2012):

'Diversity becomes a technology of happiness: through diversity, the organisation is represented "happily" as "getting along", as committed to equality, as anti-racist. Your arrival is thus a happy occasion for the organisation. But you must smile—you must express gratitude for having been received. If your arrival is a sign of diversity, then you are a success story. You turn an action point into an outcome' (2009: 46).

The following sections navigate the emotional landscapes of academia, seeking to move beyond the 'stickiness' of academia; I combine autoethnographic stories as I move away from just 'mapping myself' in and out of the classroom in teaching-research encounters and towards consideration of (un)happy arrivals and blockages:

Institutional benefits accrue to the young lecturer in the form of promotion, career and geographical mobility: she moves from there to here and seems to fit-in and take up her space. Even this requires an explanation; surely this is too soon? Surely she must be too ambitious, too individualist, too removed from The Family or any emotional cares, able instead to just invest in herself? Does she have children? A partner? Does she have work-life balance or just work too hard? Even (feminist) successes may be recast as failures in normative measures of fitting-in, moving, achieving and (not) caring and as she considers this, the question of what it means to live out, activate and be present in and through academia become pressing issues...

Mapping Myself? The Queer Map, Academia and Me

Recently I was asked by an LGBT staff-student group to provide my 'diversity story' for the purposes of university marketing: 'let them know we are here, we are queer!' Being 'diverse' for and in the institution can be

an awkward premium and a personalised pain, an enduring sore point that harms, while diversity is hastened as promise, cure and capital (Ahmed 2012). Here the valuing of diversity is packaged as offering unlimited benefits, fostering creativity and innovation, also achieved (or displaced) through successful (private) management of precarious subject positions ('queerness'). Diversity becomes flexible, something that is done in and out of margins and mainstreams. The ideal of employability, displayed in management manuals, in 'cosy' or 'happy' diversity documents, and promotions material, reactivates certain knowledges and skills while allowing a presentation of these 'assets' as merely self-realizations of individual capacity as factual, neutral, unemotional (Hochschild 1983; Adkins and Lury 1999; Addison 2012). In contrasting professional and personal levels, some do not simply have to 'come out'—or smile—but rather must fit in and easily align themselves with institutional arrangements and expectations. Divisions continue within the university environment itself, often reproduced despite the work of 'coming against' and 'coming out', in managing precariousness: being institutionally encouraged to stand out and 'come out' places this labour on some bodies more than others, where heterosexuality, whiteness⁶ and middle-classness go unmarked, not made to stand for diversity, internationalisation or widening participation.

Telling stories of arrival, presence and comfort—projecting private feelings to be publically conveyed via institutional websites—can collide with institutional teaching context which attempt to disrupt a neat 'diversity' 'outness', transcending a marketing and capturing of 'the diverse'. Yet this counter approach, away from the objective, rational, neutral institution, presents particular feelings and experiences in the classroom which may disrupt rather than consolidate a sense of fitting in and arriving in place:

A young female lecturer starting out in her career sits behind her closed office door (observe her dangling on the bottom rung of academia, while ambivalently hopeful, if not expectant or certain of upward climbs). While students bunch and buzz outside, emails are monotonously checked, and she pauses to reflect upon the space she now inhabits with its various freedoms and constraints (not the biggest office...). Snippets of student chatter are overheard; behind her door they are pausing over whether to choose

her course this semester—who knows what she’s really like (one of them, one of us)? How young is she (who does she think she is)? Where does she come from (funny accent)? And what about that hair cut, those clothes (a lesbian?!!). Suspicion, excitement and a dose of caution gather in the corridor; pens linger over her sign-up sheet—what has she and these students signed up for? An official ‘diversity and equality’ email arrives in her inbox, all mainstreamed and official. The university welcomes, actions, promises; an inclusive certainty, a new agenda, a line on ‘sexual minorities’... While she reads and searches, a voice from outside authoritatively declares ‘She IS a lesbian’. Her course, herself—a matter of fact? A threat? An absence? What should she do? She opens the door, heads to the printer, picks up the email, and a few looks along the way...

Opening and closing those same academic doors, many feminist researchers have spoken about how feminists frequently occupy insider/outsider positions within academia, often mapped out and connected by political and personal affiliations, pains and contradictions (Jackson 2004; Reay 1998; Evans 2010). Speaking of universities as particularly greedy or demanding institutions, Hey (2004) critically assesses regimes of knowledge production, distribution and control, where political and personal elements of identity (such as being a feminist, a lesbian, working class) are erased and replaced by the demands of a productive, neutral and rational professional identity. Arrivals in academia, in the classroom and in the research field can involve precarious, threatening and injurious inhabitations, where different emotional states arise in the course of navigating the classroom, corridor and even ‘private’ office space (as above). Many have charted divisions and intersections, on being *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (Spivak 1993) and *Labourers in the Knowledge Factory* (Tokarczyk and Fay 1993), where academics from working-class backgrounds speak of feeling particularly out of place, without space and unable to return ‘home’, actively forcing themselves to ‘fit’ in strange places (Skeggs 1995, 1997; Wakeling 2010; Binnie 2011). The emotional landscapes of class involve navigating ‘wrong’ feelings of shame, stupidity and valuelessness. As Annette Kuhn (1995: 97–8) writes:

‘You can so easily internalize the judgements of a different culture and believe—no, know—that there is something shameful and wrong about

you, that you are inarticulate and stupid, have nothing to say of any value or importance, that no one will listen to you in any case, that you are undeserving, unentitled, cannot think properly, are incapable of “getting it right”.

These feelings are echoed in the long tradition in Black feminist writing on the dislocations of race and sexuality within academia⁷ (Hill Collins 1986; Haritaworn 2011; Ahmed 2012) and how these are felt, moved through and personalised (as anger, shame and unhappiness), while whiteness goes unnamed and unmarked.

Emotional intersections of feeling and being wrong in campus spaces (including in our own offices) reveal the production of (im)proper research-teaching subjectivities and (im)proper student responses with, for example, students evaluating and critiquing lecturers’ embodied performances and presentations. Academic inhabitations and evaluations convey the structured, situational and intersectional nature of identity accomplishments, emotional tensions and refusals in—and beyond—academia where our presence, arrivals and success are felt and queried. The question then concerns which positions, claims, feelings and identities can and should be staked out within dangerous institutions that increasingly expect more: more output, more time and more disclosures as indicators or embodiments of ‘diversity’ (Berglund 2006). In contrasting professional and personal levels, some simply do not have to ‘come out’ at all but rather fit in and easily align with institutional arrangements and expectations.

What do you imagine of this ‘young academic’? What does she look like, short hair besides? (It does matter, not least to her.) Dressing for work is mostly a causal affair, the wardrobe proud in its choice provisions: jeans, vests, jeans, vests. If this is dressing for success, should she hang up the vest, get another costume (are long sleeves safer)? She strolls along the corridor, outfit on, suited people pause in awe of her: a) hardiness (‘a vest in winter, do you not get cold?!’) b) stupidity (‘you’re a student no more’) c) good taste (unlikely). In the comments, criticisms and doubtful praise, the feminism she knows is disappeared. She glances down, she IS clothed. This wasn’t meant to be subversive...

Many times in many places, including on the written academic page, I ‘come out’ in signalling class and sexual identity (Taylor 2005, 2007).

Sometimes my identifications are defensive retorts, sometimes obvious truths, often markers read and understood by those in the know, encoded and revealed by embodied appearance and accent. Social class is a contested category, combining the material, cultural, emotional and spatial, and this contestation often confuses, where sexuality ‘rescues’ my research (and myself); what is seen as boring and rather outdated is seemingly (but uncomfortably) redeemed by the exciting and the queer. Class is not a difference that can easily be incorporated into a queer research framework or institutional practice, where notions of deconstruction and diversity sit uneasily alongside that which often is still not named, complicating ideas of multiplicity and situatedness inside and outside of academia. Along with writers such as Diane Reay (1998) and Valerie Hey (2004) writing about the ‘psychic landscapes’ of social class, Annette Kuhn (2002) vividly conveys the emotional landscapes and embodied geographies of social class, intersecting educational environments, emotions, appearance, performance and recognition in placing class:

Class is not just about the way you talk, or dress, or furnish your home; it is not about the job you do or how much money you make doing it; nor it is merely about whether or not you have A levels or went to university, nor which university you went to. Class is something beneath your clothes, under your skin, in your reflexes, in your psyche, at the very core of your being. In the all-encompassing English⁸ class system, if you know that you are in the ‘wrong’ class, you know you are a valueless person. Working-class children of my generation who, against the odds, got a selective secondary education learned this lesson every time they put on their grammar school uniforms. The price they were asked to pay for their education was amnesia, a sense of being uprooted—and above all, perhaps, a loss of authenticity, an inability to draw on the wisdom, strength and resources of their roots to forge their own paths to adulthood. (Kuhn 2002: 117)

These uncomfortable processes of *feeling* mobility (as ‘uprootedness’, ‘amnesia’)—as a forgetfulness as well as a powerful reminder—intersect with sexuality in the educational landscape.

For example, the classroom is often a very heteronormative location where students’ heterosexism and homophobia have to be managed.

Within the feminist classroom—as well as outside it—I’ve heard defensive and mocking reactions, which, for example, detach feminism from queer and lesbian identities and resituate it as ‘men friendly’ (as if ‘feminism’, ‘queer’, ‘lesbian’ cannot be ‘men friendly’ and as if being ‘men friendly’ was the political-professional-personal hope of all of those combined identifiers). My perspectives on coming out vary by context of teaching (e.g. classroom environment, topic), and sometimes students are left to ‘read between the lines’. Sometimes ‘reading between the lines’ is injurious and insulting, as made vivid in a partly adapted (to preserve anonymity) response from student feedback:

‘...I realize sociology is predominantly a women’s subject, hence the large amount of girls enrolled in the topic. But I have never come across a module leader with such a dislike towards boys... I’m sure having gone to a private school and studying ‘class’ didn’t affect her opinion of me but felt the slightly obvious feminist views and condescending attitude towards men was a bit too blatant. There needs to be a re-think in her approach towards the men in class as equals, not below women...’ (student feedback, 2009; see Taylor 2012b).

That these words personally hurt as well as ‘objectively’ feedback to module leaders as part of institutional regulation of ‘standards’ itself speaks to the careful weighing-up of pros and cons that can be involved in classroom environments, where to ‘come out’ (or not) is a live dilemma and can constitute a ‘coming against’. Silence and articulation, tensions and contradictions, claims and denials are all part of the intersectional slippages, which are negotiated in academia—and by some (‘blatant feminists’) more than others. Efforts to challenge heteronormativity within higher educational settings can themselves reveal how identity and space are mutually constituted, reconfigured and re-embedded: *I come out and they, perhaps you, don’t have to.*

The focus and burden to come out, to reveal and make difference known, could be potentially displaced by considering how *privileged* positions are inhabited, done and undone (including in institutional feedback and appraisals) (see Haritaworn 2011). But displacing the importance of the ‘coming out’ imperative is difficult when personal-

profession 'feedback' demand and reproduce (in)visibilities, emotional labour and emotional exhaustion:

... At the end of her course she distributes module feedback forms, welcoming "constructive criticism" (Teaching Certificate now completed). How will they rate her? The service provided, polished enough? Or excessively threatening, a step out of place? Sociological analysis embodied as 'personal', academic authority condemned as 'niche'. Pressure and promotion, as a personal problem. She's read the guidelines 'Dignity at Work' but words off the page are more insidious. Although she's situated feminism(s) in their political, social, historical context, teasing out complexity and tension, she sees that 'it' (like her) has been reduced as a conspiracy, as a conspirator, as anti-men (her all female class protest and fear). She conspires, she challenges. And she gets tired.

Personalised (and spatialised) disjunctures and misfittings can act as realisations and re-articulations of the long-standing feminist declaration of the 'personal as political', while political actualisation requires a move beyond individual placement, beyond individual reflexivity—and tiredness—alone (Skeggs 1997). The issue of 'who gets to talk' is partly about what we ask and how we hear (Back 2007): I start with my own (dis) identifications but this is not, however, meant as solely personalised confession, whereby research reflexivity is achieved in 'coming out' on paper but as responsive to the higher educational landscape that I encounter in the classroom and beyond.

Feminist research has insisted on practices that involve self-situating to avoid overarching universalism, yet an easy insertion of identity categories ('lesbian', 'working class') risks neglecting attention to the resources required to tell (legitimate) stories and claim space, tending towards 'self-promotion' rather than signalling responsibility and accountability in and throughout research(ing). Adkins (2002) criticises the misplacement of researchers' introspective reflexivity as signalling good research, positioned against a bad lack, which fails to consider uneven distributions of reflexivity in relation to class and gender. In seeking to situate 'selves' and engage with multiplicity (that queer invites), I also seek to attend to the complexities and complications in articulating varied—and unequal—

positions and feelings in academia and through research and teaching encounters (Taylor 2009, 2010b; Haritaworn 2011). Fear of claims-making and misrepresentation may be refocused in listening to convergences and differences, to hear lived emotional experience as a challenge to an institutional ‘inclusion’ and commodified ‘diversity’ that announces ‘arrivals’ (Ahmed 2012; Addison 2012). Telling stories of arrival, presence and comfort can collide with institutional contexts, disrupting rather than consolidating a sense of fitting in and arriving in place.

The queer academic is encouraged, hastened, to change her academic ‘five keywords’ when she declares that ‘lesbian’ and ‘working class’ are still reappearing on the mainstreamed page (and included in peer performance development reviews as evaluative institutional exercises involving being and aligned professionally in time and place). ‘Five keywords’ becomes a map of me, as excessive presence and/or absence, devoid of the passionate attachments woven through research contexts and academic inhabitations, and which I’m encouraged to move away from (to a proper, less ‘niche’, less ‘me’, sociology). The forced pause—and repetition—is suggestive of what becomes excessive knowledge, a messy contribution, a past which should—even if embodied—be given up for projections into another, different, disembodied academic future (Hines and Taylor 2012). But the queer academic insists: in advancing approaches she won’t just be moved on, displaced, in the call to the new and the mobile. As I’ve highlighted, the neo-liberal university is a site which demands a mobility of practice and an entrepreneurial orientation to local-global markets (Ong 2006); the academic is encouraged to extend her reach, to reach out to ‘diverse communities’ and to do so as a responsive-responsible ‘engaged’ subject. As funded researcher, she now decides on the presence/absence of others as awkward labours, with research encounters made to ‘fit’ the marketisation of place and publics.

Fitting Into Place? Research-Researched-Researcher Encounters

A young lecturer—with a still frequent emphasis on the young—receives an email from her PhD student: its several pages long and a potential chapter in itself. She realises this could be serious and jumps down the

paragraphs trying to find the urgency in her inbox (and there are many urgencies in her inbox). The message is this: the student is going to have a baby, she knows this is a shock, she hopes it won't affect opinions of her or her commitment to work, she questions if this will be recognised, if her funding will continue, her deadline extended, her employability ended... She wonders if her potential is already being recast as a failure and the sense of being in the wrong time (too young to mother, too young to be a successful academic) is transmitted in these exchanges... Work is done in reading between the lines of emails, policies and funding guidance which speak of equal opportunities, a commitment to diversity, an 'investors in people' status: forms are completed, procedures are followed and pregnancy is declared at the appropriate time—being 'pregnant enough' (for recognition, extension, advice) is stated as 22 weeks, the official time when institutional recognition can begin. 'You're not the first person to have a baby' is the relayed response to the student's concerns and questions. The phone rings—ESRC funding has been received and a research associate vacancy advertised. The potential candidate is ringing to ask is she is still eligible to apply? She's just found out that she is pregnant. The lecturer is thinking equal opps, she's thinking HR. And she's thinking ESRC deadlines. What would you be thinking? Her research associate gives birth, takes time out. She's not entitled to institutional benefits having not served enough time. But she's extending her maternity leave nonetheless...

There are more emotional disjunctures and labours felt in occupying academia, in attempting to find a place on the academic map and in moving through intersecting spaces of research-researched-researcher. At an author-meets-critics session, my colleague and critic tells me she is going to respond to my book *Fitting Into Place? Class and Gender Geographies and Temporalities* 'as an American' and, for some reason, I want to escape (perhaps as a Scot). The 'bigness' and 'smallness' of space becomes striking, as we negotiate belongings and institutional longings. Our identities travel in and out of our 'homes' and often collide rather than cohere, where returns to 'our place' can involve a claim and entitlement as well as a disavowal (e.g. of transnational or 'global' feminisms) (Spivak 1993). Back offers a critique of these scales of comparison, seeking instead to move between the near and far: 'A global sociological imagination offers the possibility of refiguring the relationship between the

past and the present and the near and the far' (Back 2007: 23). Such a global sociological imagination is seen to work against a 'facile internationalism', claiming to speak for all everywhere: that the place, or pace, of certain spatialities and subjectivities are often accredited with a transformative future-orientated potential ('modern'), situated against other borderlands, fails to attend to legacies, presences and futures that carry across and intersect place.

It seems important not to collapse different spaces now included on the map of the good academic, who simply extends her own reach by racing forward in researching, consuming, more space: that her 'arrival' may well contradictorily mark the end of class, the excess of sexuality, the diversity of space. There are histories of 'past encounters' that travel with and between us in occupying space, where it takes time, energy and resources to move between 'here' and 'there'. This is something I was conscious of in writing up research at a distance during my Fulbright-sponsored research visit in the United States, almost a year after fieldwork for *Fitting Into Place?* was completed. The spatial immediacy of the local, as the fieldwork site (North East of England) and my place of residence 'then', can be compared against my 'new' place 'right now' (which is also now 'then'), the North East of the United States. But to say I have travelled and been both 'near and far' is to highlight only my own researcher mobility, with a danger too of forgetting the ways we are always writing at a geographical-emotional-material distance, and in a particular time. But, again, this is not simply a story about me, as a case of one; instead it is about the broader challenge in 'fitting into place'. So, I ask what 'sticks' and what or who is 'fixed' in place?

Mapping the landscapes of belonging amongst British-Asian women, Tolia-Kelly (2010) identifies mobility as 'a catalyst for new mobile nationalisms' forming new senses of belonging not bound to a single nation or state citizenship. While the post-colonial UK context is posed as a point of international, mobile belonging and as a respite against racism, it seems necessary to ask what such mobility brings into effect in detaching and reattaching specific bodies to specific places, as a sticky process which interrupts the narrative of choice, selection and even of diasporic possibility. Engaging with questions of Britishness, via Tolia-Kelly's call for attention to landscapes of memory and race, involves attending to

inclusions and exclusions, familiarity and strangeness and also to the elisions between Britishness and Englishness, apparent in regional disidentification and variation. Recalling 'quintessential Englishness', Tolia-Kelly (2010) recalls drinking tea and learning the manners and cultures of England, via nursery rhythms and C.S. Lewis stories; these are felt and experienced truths, selected and repeated under historical weights and (post)colonial regimes. These recollections seem 'far away' from my own immediate associations of Britishness, yet they do not disappear if they are not felt by me; I recognise their racialising, classing productions.

I am reminded of an awkward first meeting with a now close friend, where the boundaries of nationhood were re-enacted, disputed and embodied even as we met in the 'same place'. As a North American, this friend recalled the particularity and strangeness of 'British ways' recognisable to her as an 'outsider'; yet I also felt an 'outsider' on hearing these 'strange ways', evocative, in my mind of a distant upper-class Englishness, dissimilar to my identifications with working-class Scottishness and seemingly inattentive to the constituent parts of Britishness, both geographically and politically. Of course, these associations have histories, presences, consequences and material effects beyond these conversational slippages, and I am not claiming a 'strangeness', distance or complete outsider status to Britishness (I am white, I have a British passport, enabling a Fulbright scholarship, enabling my relatively unproblematic entry to the United States: even as I was officially named a 'non-resident alien' and I know, passport in hand, that I am not *that* alien). In travelling from different places, from North America and Scotland, our journeys into and experience of Britishness, Englishness, Americanisms were and are differently negotiated, not necessarily rooted to place, even as these journeys and histories still carry, on the surface of our bodies, as visualised in our conflicting reactions (just as in our experiences as students-researchers-teachers). My point is not, however, to claim a native truth. Rather, as Back notes these histories and futures carry as we 'live in and across the histories and futures that they both carry and make on a daily basis' (2007: 148), as Kuhn (1995) so vividly connects to feelings residing 'in our skin'. There are also different 'entry points' into cities and communities, as, for example, 'resident', 'researcher', 'citizen', 'foreigner' and 'tourist', which is not to forget where I am coming

from in claiming all of these; things carry differently and, as Ahmed (2004) states, some never 'arrive' due to where they are coming from.

To arrive suggests a journey, even an invitation (e.g. from the diverse institution, the tourist city), which nonetheless still fits people to places very differently. The 'invitation to listen' could, Back (2007) argues, include scholars, publics, activists, journalists in collaboration as a community of 'users' sharing ideas and instigating dialogues. As with long-standing feminist interventions on knowledge, use and economies of articulation, values and meaning, Back offers insight into the limits of writing and the complexities of dialogue and listening (as against a 'knowledge transfer'): 'As well as providing an opportunity to reach a wider audience, stepping out in public... can also involve vulnerability and political compromise' (2007: 161). In *Fitting Into Place?* there were challenges in communicating data to the project user group, as the complexities of fieldwork, recruitment, access and findings were obscured in presenting a discernible usable message, devoid of the emotional complexities within the fieldwork, data and in 'user-group' encounters. This criticism is not intended to entirely undermine use—either 'theirs' or 'mine'—but to socially situate viewpoints, arrivals and departures (in research as in teaching).

When themes of class cut through user-group discussions, as evidenced and named in the data, users tended to refer to celebrations of (male) working-class successes in the region (often referring to their own 'working-class' backgrounds) and how these successes could be sold as part of the 'Americanised *Tyneside* dream'. The users wanted to hear about more success stories within the data and how these could be marketed as 'good and right' social mobility (also conveyed by universities). So-called unsuccessful stories of 'failure', such as accounts of young women feeling uncomfortable using emblematic places of culture such the Baltic art gallery, were perceived as blights on the 'North East brand'. Rather than problematising the regeneration of these spaces, as engendering class distinctions, the young women were subject to vocal social engineering—as users discussed how these young women could (and should) be more engaged with culture: What could be done to *make* them like that space, to make them align emotionally? Why were they not 'coming forward' as regenerated subjects? Regenerated space was being validated to coercively

shape people into becoming or excluding them as backward. Here, *people* become the problem, not *place*. Participating as consumers of culture, economy and space was thus viewed a prerequisite to active citizenship. If, like the young working-class women excluded from the Baltic (or from higher education), people could not engage with space or demonstrate aspirations to consume, then they appeared to fall outside of the vision these users had of the North East (shared by local universities). Some felt that the research could be used to identify gaps in policies; when gaps in ‘regenerating’ people and place were identified, then services could move in (in calling city subjects to ‘come forward’ like universities’ widening participation/diversity calls).

Awkward moments of intrusion and being out of place were apparent throughout research, causing reflection on who and what travels between spaces: the academic researcher recast as community engager, or as tourist, raises difficulties in ‘listening’ where other embodied sensations evoke proximity and distance in being present and ‘public’. Here is another story to tell, one of ‘Shadow Spaces’⁹:

Shadow Spaces: From University to City Space

It was a typical grey day in Newcastle, a light drizzle of rain was falling. A crowd began to gather on the large roundabout where the residential-leisure complex ‘Bar 55 degrees North’ and Metro Radio are situated. This space is gentrified and disconnected from the rest of the city, where the sole purpose is to consume or go into a stack of professional apartments. We looked around at the people forming as an excited, eclectic group—all waiting for the main event and the ripple of tension buzzing between excited clusters indicated that nobody really knew what was going on. We thought they were all a bit strange really, they did not look like your typical ‘Geordie’ to me. Nobody who actually lived in Newcastle would be going on this tour, surely? Well, apart from me and Michelle there in our researcher roles. There were no signs that an ‘experience’ was about to take place. Everyone was waiting, but for what? Was the space, or its subjects, going to suddenly transform or transgress? Myself and Michelle stood at the edge of the crowd. There were plenty of middle-class people there—they were easy to spot, some middle aged, slightly too bohemian and

colourful—I imagined they would dine out on this experience for weeks; there were students and the ‘cultured’ type with their glasses, sensible shoes and waterproof jackets—they were prepared. One or two academic types hovered, waiting, with hats on. The ‘Geordies’ kept walking past, giving sideways glances to this mix-up of people, what were they waiting for? Can’t they see it’s raining? The tour guide seemed to materialise from nowhere and we were off, promised a tour of the city in a way we had never seen, sensed, felt or touched it before. People jostled to the front, wanting to be first. Michelle and I hung back. This was not the way I’d been taught to experience a city, as a woman you walk with a purpose, do not talk to these strangers: you call that a shadow space but it’s not really, just because you don’t go there. Here were a bunch of people who had never met before all talking the tourist chat to each other, bonding as they all shuffled into the great unknown. Safety in numbers. Standing in a dark alleyway looking at a corner, now recast as a historical ‘hidden treasure’ (‘Could we imagine what had happened here?’ Sexual encounters? Illicit drug use? Underage drinking?)...

Hanging back to make a quick get-away if needed, we were herded to the concrete walk-way. A ripple of excitement went through the crowd as a strange screeching pierced the familiar sound of traffic. People rearranged themselves so they could see over the side of the walk way and below a man was playing the saxophone (not very well). There were ‘hums and haas’ about the oddly placed sound, how it turned our perception of space upside down and back to front. I jumped as a drum started to beat out of time next to me. The noise was disruptive and went on for about ten minutes, I watched what other people were doing, unsure where to put myself, there were the wistful looks into the sky; there were the slightly nervous giggles from some of the students and there were the serious contemplative types thinking deeply. Looking round and growing impatient I realised we were being filmed and was even more mortified. I’d seen lots of places like this before, the council estate where we now intruded upon, with none of it being ‘exotic’ ‘strange’ or ‘shadow’ to me; I’ve walked through plenty of ‘shadow spaces’, even when it’s been dripping with rain and you keep moving. You don’t hang around. People live here. Someone opened their window from the flat on the 9th floor to see what all the fuss was about; they even took a photo of us. Them watching us, watching them.

We move on, not talking. It’s about what they can tell us. We are going under the motorway where the wire grid fence has been pulled down. This is where homeless people live; this is their space, and we’re not invited.

'Look', he says, 'Someone sleeps here, there's his bed. There's been a fire too'. People point at the bottles, look for needles. You wouldn't come here if it wasn't for me, he's thinking, you wouldn't know there was life here. The group breaks apart into contemplation clusters again. I guess I'm supposed to be absorbing the 'alternative' and appreciating that so-called 'no-go' spaces can make us feel uncomfortable, while acquiring the lives of others as touristic memories of place.

In asking what 'travels', I am not seeking to abandon these journeys in and out of the classroom as no-go areas. We all carry physical and mental maps with us as common referents, facilitating feelings about and activities in space that blend images, emotions and meanings. Yet we are not all streetwise subjects, 'expert' researchers, knowing where to go as 'The wise subject, the one who knows where and where not to walk, how and how not to move, who and who not to talk to, has an expertise that can be understood as both bodily and cultural capital' (Ahmed 2000: 34). I want to think what it means to walk through these places politically and what use these 'travels' have for different researchers and audiences who may be (dis)engaged by noisy—think saxophone—presences/absences. In re-engaging the senses (and a sense of higher education), researchers have a responsibility to rethink who they talk to and travel with:

I sit in a New York café completing the book. I'm taking up my space as I write about those who cannot take up space as theirs. This is a trendy-but-casual, self-consciously hard-working but cool venue: people are generally behind their laptops, doubling up and sharing tables only when absolutely necessary. Unlike some other cafes you do not have to pay for table-time, you are free to sit and work and take up space for as long as your cappuccino remains topped-up. There is a group of young women, probably 14–16 years old, drinking, not coffee in its various sizes, brands and tastes, but juice and milkshakes. They are wearing pyjama bottoms, grouped together and talking loudly: they cause spillages and do their best to mop the mess up in fits of hysterics as the adults stare and frown. I glance over: I'm thinking 'spoiled brats'. I'm thinking how long I waited before going into a coffee shop and feeling entitled to be there; how long before I got the laptop, the credentials, the taste for a good coffee, only to compete against these young women's screams. I'm thinking I did not come here in my pyjamas—not today nor any other time past: how do they get to belong

already? Do I want them to be excluded? Would you want them to go away? As I, and you, ponder this, others have already made up their minds: the young women are asked to be quiet. 'People are working', 'this is an adult space', two men echo, one of whom then returns to speaking loudly on his mobile phone. I feel my allegiances and annoyances change as the young women gather up their belongings; the men roll their eyes and some placatory older women appease the men with reassurances that they can get back to work. 'It's different with boys' the men conclude.

Young women appear in such spaces (think pyjama bottoms), resituated as visible and present (yet still problematic) just as they appear in the public sphere more generally, as the new beneficiaries of the future (in education, in employment). Such entry into public space produces an intensified focus on the proper ways to occupy space, or the proper place to 'be' and feel, as 'happily' included (Ahmed 2009). The take-up of space is a complex process, where class, sexuality, gender and age are produced in and before we get to the café, to make our selections and take up seats. I read the young women in the trendy café as middle class, I see them placed as un-entitled even in their displays of entitlement. 'It's different with class', I conclude.

Conclusion

I started this chapter by thinking through my own presence and absence and the varied journeys, different labours and divided recognitions within and beyond academia. The travelling academic may not be completely undone in these café-classroom encounters, but the critical differentials in processes of being and becoming often mean that some are unable to move into teaching-research landscapes, to move through and activate that terrain as their own, as properly academic. Others experience disjunctures in academic occupations, felt through research and teaching contexts. Being and 'becoming' on the academic map involves emotional conflicts across time and place, felt in occupying academia, especially when this demands a mobility of practice and an entrepreneurial orientation to local-global markets (as 'outreach', 'widening participation', 'diverse publics').

Points of arriving, departing and travelling through institutional space intersect with *feelings* about academia, as emotional and material matters manifest in teaching and research encounters, where some can ‘come forward’ while others are blocked, in coming out and against institutional inequalities. Here, even a ‘critical pedagogy’ and a queer ‘outness’ may be read as a failure and a lack of ‘use’. The emotional landscape of class—and sexuality—suggests a fixity or ‘stickiness’ attached to some subjects, which encompass professional and personal passions and pains, as we inhabit research and teaching space.

Notes

1. Contestations over the meanings of ‘coming out’ exist; it is variously seen as an empowering act of recognition, a normative ideal or an option not available to everyone (Taylor 2007; Stella 2010; Tauqir et al. 2011). Notably, literature has queried the centrality of visibility and ‘coming out’ in the lived experiences of many queers, particularly work seeking to advance an intersectional perspective: research has shown that visibility may be privilege not readily available to, for example, working-class lesbian women (Taylor 2007, 2011c) or Russian lesbians (Stella 2010). ‘Coming out’ is not always an empowering or liberating act; this paradigm can create distance between ‘out’ and ‘closeted’ LGBT subjects, where the latter are represented as repressed individuals who have internalised the homophobia, often located geographically, foregrounding a ‘West and the rest’ linear model of coming out from repression to liberation. Many have queried if ‘articulation equals liberation’, asking questions about voice and silence where white, middle-class and Western LGBT activists have pursued rights-based citizenship claims, sometimes on behalf of their ‘queer racialised’ ‘others’ (Stella 2010; Decena 2011; Tauqir et al. 2011).
2. This is based on ESRC-funded research ‘*From the Coal Face to the Car Park? Intersections of Class and Gender in the North East*’ (RES-000-22-2150), and I thank the ESRC for funding this project.
3. In pointing to this book—and the laboured efforts as well as emotional affect in and beyond its now censored pages (see Douglas et al. 2011)—I hope to signal the importance of anti-racist queer critiques and the ongo-

- ing efforts in enacting more caring presences and coalitions (Tauqir et al. 2011). Many have pointed to the worth of interrogating normative identities and positioning (such as whiteness, able-bodiedness, heterosexuality), and I hope to join this conversation on a level which is empirically plausible and which questions class and sexuality in academia.
4. Queer has been used as an umbrella term for 'LGBT' identities, but it is also used as a rejection of identity categories and, instead, as a queer *practice*. I hope to hold onto the ways that blockages stick to particular material bodies, often with social and economic consequences, where class in particular is often absent from debates on queer (Skeggs 1997; Taylor 2007).
 5. This research was conducted in an established red-brick university which is a member of the elite UK Russell Group. Widening participation issues are different in 'new' post-1992 universities, but in this new educational climate of Conservative-Liberal fees, it is these post-1992 institutions which have long-standing commitments to 'widening participation' as a tangible everyday reality that are now rendered more vulnerable. In contrast, elite universities may be in a position to offer limited student bursaries through the National Scholarship Programme, without altering their overall white, middle-class composition (see Taylor and Allen 2011).
 6. I do not have to 'come out' about my white status since this is institutionally unmarked where 'diverse' 'others' are used to signal 'internationalisation' and effective outreach, often when a solid white, middle-class presence persists. I do not come up against processes of racialisation as *blockages*; rather whiteness is a fit and alignment with institutionalised normativities. Intersectional approaches necessarily take account of the collisions between multiple positions of advantage and disadvantage, where structural frames (race, class, gender in particular) often still have to be merged with the feelings, inhabitations and experiences of these lived inequalities.
 7. There are still efforts to be made in considering inequalities as not simply analogous to one another: sexuality, race and class, for example, can be positioned as more or less 'palatable' or marketable (Taylor and Scurry 2011), 'dealt with' by the engaged institution, which effaces the ongoing intersectional production of these, rather than as a hierarchical 'tick box' of inclusion now differently 'dealt with'.
 8. Annette Kuhn writes about the particularity of the *English* class system, and I have queried the collapsing of Englishness as a stand-in for Britishness, which sidelines the constituent parts of the UK both

geographically and politically (Taylor 2012a). There is a persistent portrayal of class as something ‘particularly British’ which seems to collapse its global productions and local specificity (Spivak 1993; Tolia-Kelly 2010).

9. ‘Shadow Spaces’ was a city tour advertised and circulated via email.

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China with 'Foreign Talent' Characteristics: A 'Guerrilla' Autoethnography of Performing 'Foreign Talentness' in a Chinese University

Lauren Ila Misiaszek

Introduction

This chapter is rooted in a four-year critical, feminist autoethnographical study of my own performativity of 'foreign talentness' in a Chinese university. Weaving discussions on research methodologies within critical and feminist sociology of higher education, Freirean theory, and macro discourse of 'foreign talents', I explore the 'guerrilla' form of a noncommittal written performative autoethnography. I operationalize the word *guerrilla* as referring to actions or activities performed in an impromptu way, often without authorization. I have chosen this term to capture how some ideas will be presented in a way perhaps not 'author/ized' by the reader as 'acceptable' or 'legitimate', particularly due to their length, form, and/or disparateness. I label this form of autoethnography

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Y. Taylor, K. Lahad (eds.), *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University*, Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64224-6_5

‘autoethnonegraphy’, a renegotiated form of autoethnography that recognizes and allows for gaps and silences in experience of writing about the self. My autoethnonegraphy is rooted in the insertion of notes, meditations, scenes, and a poem, at times woven into, and at times, interrupting, the analysis; it explores the possibilities and limitations of creating knowledge about my context through autoethnography.

In Part 1, I present a series of short, disparate notes to highlight the range of influences on my thinking. Then, in Part 2, I present a series of 11 ‘meditations’, analyses of different lengths. An initial meditation on the environment is followed by a series of three meditations on methodology. In the fifth meditation, I explore the foreign talent discourse. This is followed by a series of six final meditations on higher education: contradictions and performativity, positivism, ‘intellectual ceiling’, ‘perverse privilege’, co-visibility, and binaries. A conclusion follows.

Both Parts 1 and 2 can be read nonlinearly. When there is important cross-referencing of content between meditations, parenthetical reference to the cross-reference will be used (e.g. (‘Meditation 1’)), inspired by the following:

You might want to read each section independently, rather than following the book from start to finish. The book is not conceived of as ‘linear’ in its approach, although it does attempt to provide a structure that is clear and accessible and makes sense to the person reading it... This is deliberate; it draws on the critiques of academic writing, seeks to disrupt the conventions that might exacerbate exclusions and non-participation in higher education and also takes a post-structural approach to meaning. (Burke 2012)

As well, this chapter builds on my exploration of the concept of sketches in earlier work (Misiaszek 2016a (online); forthcoming (print)) that examines Ball’s concept of a workbook-style book (Ball 2012) in relationship to Freire’s *inédito viável* (Romão 2007); I note:

The precedent of this discursual comfort in the inevitable discomfort of ‘try[ing] [things] out for size’ (Ball 2012), again brings to mind the central characteristics of *inédito viável* (incompleteness, inconclusiveness, and unaccomplishedness).

I am again interested in this discomfort of 'trying things out for size', both in content and form.

Locating the chapter within this book, it is an attempt at disruption in form, content, and existence as a response to the constraints of the global neoliberal university system; for instance, regarding the latter, this chapter does not currently 'count' as a legitimate output in my context. It reveals some of the embodied contradictions within the Chinese higher education system that itself pressures actors within/is pressured by the 'world-class university' race; it is a system not easily defined as neatly 'peripheral' nor 'central'.

I recognize the choppiness of this chapter and an unevenness of analysis. But, considering how the global neoliberal university system is manifested here in China, I conclude that the methodological and ethical choice of 'bouncing around'—not lingering too long on situations that may still be going on and which may be deeply painful for me and others around me—can offer possibilities of 'real-time' *autoethnography*. I believe that these 'real-time' methodological strategies can open up possibilities and proposals for more critical spaces of 'speaking into the listening', to use the language of council circles (Provisor [n.d.](#))—speaking in spaces where all actors, including the 'foreign talent', feels heard. And more urgently, they offer possibilities to confront the psychosocial/emotional needs of international students, who, as I explore, are entangled in these same processes but who have far less power in the 'internationalizing' game.

Part 1: Notes

Note 1: In writing about the life of writer, professor, and 2016 MacArthur Fellow Maggie Nelson, *New Yorker* writer Hilton Als notes about Nelson's experience with her graduate professor, the writer Wayne Koestenbaum:

Koestenbaum's work and guidance released Nelson from certain internalized academic expectations. She said, 'I remember when I first met Wayne he told me, 'Don't get bogged down by the heavyweights.' It sounds so

simple, but it was very freeing advice. A sense of permission. (Als 2016, my emphasis)

Note 2: There is a truthful recurring joke in the expat magazines in China about the quantity (and often, repetitiveness) of expat memoirs on China. *How do these same issues apply to academic articles from/on China?*

Note 3: A colleague with decades of experience in China once said about university collaboration, ‘Everyone wants a China partner’.

Note 4: Importance of ‘not commodifying our China experience’: Robert Tierney (2016), distinguishing visiting professor in China, on a panel with my partner and me about ethics across borders. *How can I negotiate writing about China without falling into this commodification trap?*

Part 2: Meditations

Meditation 1: On Environment

Like hundreds of millions of people in the world, I often wear a pollution mask when I leave the house. This sentence implies (1) I have the money to buy the mask and (2) I have control over when I leave the house/city/country, in both the short and long term. These two conditions are not true for hundreds of millions more people across the planet. The mask and the haze as metaphors could alone frame this chapter. But the pollution is also a reality; the physical and psychological impacts (both fear of the physical impact and often isolation because of not being able to be outside) are serious; in the short term, I feel the psychological effects the most.

But the situation also evokes other ‘longitudinal’ emotions. In the following prose poem, I consider the streets of Beijing as compared to the streets of Nicaragua, a place with which I have had a relationship, namely, living and working (on the ground and at a distance) since 2004.

Zang

脏

zang (dirtiness, filthiness; a term commonly used to describe the streets of Beijing)

Every trip out of the house the *zang* gets on me.
And I have to get it off as soon as I come home.

This is
a layer of dirt
a layer of reality
proof I was alive that day—something stuck to me. my physical body was
in contact with the physical world.
A day without *zang* feels like something's missing.

Am I addicted to *zang*?
Does *zang*=exoticness?
Have I exoticized *zang*?
(Subquestion: do I like writing about *zang* because it is an exotic Chinese
word that I learned how to write?)

But how can I be addicted to *zang* if I prefer cleanliness?
Besides—I know the risk of exorcizing *zang*
because I analyze exoticism.

Or have I just accepted *zang*?
And how do I accept without exoticizing?

zang is:

charca (black waters)
construction
chaos
change.

Am I addicted to the nostalgic smell of Nicaragua/development, or running from a fear of boredom?
Am I addicted to the grittiness, or to the catharsis of bathing?

I was writing poetic autoethnography on being a body in China, a ‘foreign (talent) body’ (Meditation 5) in China, without knowing it. And beyond that, the poem illuminates the lingering emotional ‘residue’ (to stretch the poem’s themes once more) of the experience of shifting ‘expatness’, the embodied experience of relationships to multiple geographic spaces across time in nonlinear ways, namely, maintaining a relationship with Nicaragua and China.

Meditation 2: On Methodology—Autoethnography

Boylorn and Orbe (2014) define autoethnography as a ‘cultural analysis through personal narrative,’ noting, ‘we encourage a critical lens, alongside an introspective and outward one, to make sense of who we are in the context of our cultural communities’. The incorporation of theoretical analysis distinguishes autoethnography from autobiography, although I find autobiographical accounts by ‘heavyweight’ educational sinologists such as Hayhoe (2004), a small part of which is dedicated to describing her time as a foreign expert teaching English at Fudan University in Shanghai from 1980–1982, as highly important to the historical memory around this topic. The scope and history of autoethnography as a social science methodology has been well documented (Hughes et al. 2012) as have new forms of autoethnographical accounts in higher education (Cortes Santiago et al. 2016; Burke and Jackson 2007; Thiel 2016), and the many forms of autoethnography, of which, besides critical autoethnography, I am particularly drawn to the challenge of evocative autoethnography (Bochner and Ellis 2016), autoethnographic poetry (Blinne 2010), which I realized that I was engaged in after the fact. In writing this chapter, I came to consider how performativity itself can be analyzed through performative autoethnography (Spry, 2001, 2011). In doing so, reflecting on the fear, risk, and sensitivity that the authors above have explored in relationship to this methodology, I have found engaging in noncommittal written performative autoethnography through the insertion of notes, meditations, scenes (which are woven throughout this chapter), and the poem above has become a meditation on the possibilities and limitations engaging in autoethnography in this context.

The experience of writing this chapter's abstract down on paper, declaring that I would write an autoethnography about my experience, sent me into half a year of reflection—I face the normal issues of questioning the self-indulgence of this activity, the nervousness of the ethics of all of this, and thinking about the 'heavyweights' all around me, literally and figuratively. By the time this book is published, I will be in my fifth year (along with my male partner) as the first full-time, long-term foreign faculty in a faculty of education in China's Normal (teacher training) system, particularly in a graduate program for international students; I work in an international program with students from dozens of different countries, about 65% of whom are African. Since joining the faculty, a small number of other foreign men have also joined as junior faculty and a few senior foreign men now have similar long-term contracts. This, along with my age gap, positions me in particular ways. There are no foreign Scholars of Color; all of the foreign colleagues are White (of very heterogeneous, international backgrounds).

Though I find autoethnography to be an uncomfortable exercise, I nonetheless think it is important historically to the development of the currently nonexistent critical sociology of higher education in China. Recruiting and keeping 'foreign talents' (a term I find objectifying) (Meditation 5) is among the hottest topics in China; my experience, and analyzing it through the array of critical and feminist theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this book, offers a unique perspective on this topic. I also think this autoethnography could have potentially important implications for foreign faculty members in 'sensitive' contexts. And I have not found a critical autoethnography about the experience of performing foreign talentness, in China or elsewhere.

The most glaring contradiction is the classic balance in autoethnography between the urgency of *speaking truth to power* and protecting others, as well as ourselves, in the context. How can this chapter 'sit' in the tension/dialectic of autoethnography? In its preparation, I have concluded that expecting a 'full' autoethnography is not possible. Just calling it a new, 'punny' phrase is not going to better protect the context; however, renegotiating autoethnography for a fluid situation that I do not plan/want to remove myself from, and in which I hold a singular position that cannot be hidden (work on small contexts is useful here, see Moosa (2013)), is fundamental.

The *none* in *autoethnonegraphy* points to the implied silences and generalizing ‘scenes’ in this chapter, silences which themselves are problematic because again they might lead the reader to think the problem is deeper/bigger than it is, and thus, I may be perpetuating mysteriousness, vagueness, and a perception that I am hiding certain critique. While my position is fairly precarious given the nature of my three-year contract renewals, these silences are not all of the same magnitude (I have explored Gill (2010)’s concept of precariousness elsewhere (Misiaszek 2015). Related to this, I never tricked myself into believing that I could share certain autoethnographical data I have ‘collected’ here. But the data on which this chapter is based includes personal creative writing, academic presentations, domestic and international conferences, teaching and advising (including students working on projects about international student and faculty experiences) and the mundane—sociology of everyday life (Kalekin-Fishman 2013): emails, faculty meetings, formal interviews and informal conversations with students and faculty working on these same issues, English-language magazines, and extensive running memos, often written about/in the mundane spaces.

The positioning of the *none* in the middle of the word *autoethnonegraphy* is also symbolic of turning the word inside out, removing the humans involved from villainization and blame and instead focusing on the systematic residuals that are left from a process of autoethnography; I imagine it to be like feeling the logo on the inside of a silk-screened t-shirt—some of the colors and details may be missing, but the imprint, the impression, is still there.

Meditation 3: On Methodology—the *Benefit of the Doubt*

I first noted the importance of this common sense expression in a written alumni interview for my department at UCLA (Jones (Misiaszek) 2013). I have come to see it as a guiding methodological and ethical principle that is a tool for seeking perspective, beginning with the mundane. A gap in ‘benefit of the doubt’ is a gap in which essentializing and homogenizing begin to fill in. Engagement with the idea of ‘benefit of the doubt’

with various actors and within various situations is an important thread of this methodology.

Meditation 4: On Methodology—the Ethics of System Evaluation

I pause to make some notes of what this chapter is not (this exercise in negation is a tactic to navigate the ethical pitfalls of this piece and to reflect on what I both announce and denounce in this space):

This is not an evaluation or critique of my institution or anyone in it. This is about a large system in which I am trying to exist. Like many other academic systems, I have witnessed patriarchal hierarchies 'being done'. I have been 'put in my place'. I have struggled for authentic voice. There is inter-generational internalized ageism, racism, xenophobia, sexism, exoticism, and plenty of microaggressions wrapped up in all of it. There is resistance to this; I have Chinese allies, particularly female allies, who have embraced me. In the following scenes, I highlight some of these issues within the system:

Cue a scene: At a high-level nation conference for 'foreign talents', I, the only female invited speaker, to speak along with about 15 other men (only one man of Color), was removed from the schedule, at my questioning, a foreign expert affairs colleague echoed that she had noticed this and asked that I be put back on. I was put back on.

Cue follow-up scene: During the conference, the group began discussing trailing spouses:

Older, White male hard scientist: 'You recruit the wife, you recruit the professor.'

Another audience member in response: 'Or, you recruit the husband, you recruit the professor.'

Me: 'How about we use 'the partner'? There are a lot of issues of heteronormativity here.'

These scenes highlight interconnected issues of gender, race, heteronormativity, along with the challenges of the 'trailing partner'. However, my experience has led me to believe that, regardless of the identity of the 'trailing partner', there are no conditions that would catalyse an institution here to locate a position for that person unless the partner is a coincidentally a match for an open position on the

same campus. Any known/visible challenges to heteronormativity by the partners would further solidify this impossibility.

Cue scene: At a domestic conference, challenging an older, male Chinese colleague who was giving an essentializing paper on 'Africa' to a room full of students from across the continent of Africa, most of whom I teach. The colleague claimed it was a 'translation issue' between the Chinese and English; I tried to discuss how it was a broader discursive issue. Four email exchanges later with the colleague, he stops writing back.

This scene is a glimpse into the discomfort of my positionality as an earlier career, White woman from the Global North who has worked/lived in non-homogenous contexts within the Global South much of my adult life, and the tensions of ally work around (what are to me) obvious forms of neo-colonial discourse frequent in the unequally titled 'South-South' 'China-Africa' discourses, at the heart of many of my students' international experience.

Cue another general scene: Asking but being refused a translation in a public discussion about my work.

There is much unacknowledged but necessary emotional labor for me involved in this, and I am deeply fortunate to be able to reflect on this with my partner, who is experiencing the situation in his own way. I often serve as an informal and unrecognized counselor to my students who, much more than me, face these microaggressions in and out of the higher education system in China (some of whom decide to not continue in the system here because of this implicit and explicit discrimination); I perceive this to be primarily linked to the intersection of racism and xenophobia, exacerbated by classism, sexism, religious discrimination, and ageism; other expressions of aggression are even further repressed and, thus, harder to address, particularly those toward gender orientation/expression and sexual orientation. I also engage with students about how our own classroom spaces, in which both them and I (despite unequal power dynamics) are all involved, are raced, classed, and gendered (Burke 2012). As it is most of the students' first time outside of their home country, and often the first time in a space of difference of all kinds and/or an 'international class' (which is often the case of (highly heterogeneous) Chinese students), focusing on what essentialization and microaggressions mean is an iterative part of our class.

Cue scene: Mentioning in every interview/report I have conducted with student leaders, every conversation I have had with foreign expert and student affairs staff, that the most needed addition to the system here is Student Psychological Services, by people who have nuanced understanding of their realities, such as the fact that a large number of our students are 'mature students' with jobs and children in their home countries, who often feel suddenly infantilized.

Meditation 5: On Foreign Bodies, Talents, and Diasporic Spaces

To conceptualize 'foreign talent', I rely heavily on the only critical exploration of the foreign talent discourse at a macro level, Koh (2003)'s critical exploration of Singapore's foreign talent discourse; it is highly useful in my recent work on Holliday (1999)'s notion of 'small culture' (Misiaszek 2016b). Koh presents the definition of the term slowly and in depth, but it is implied that the reader would be familiar with the term at its first mention in the text:

Ideologically, these 'crises' of globalization have been translated and re-worked into 'local' state discourses about how to globalize, and a call to meet the exigencies of the new economy. part from the clarion call to be innovative, competitive, entrepreneurial, and to 'go global but stay local', a call that sits uncomfortably in the national imaginary is that of attracting foreign talent...The call to develop a 'talent capital' is premised on the claim that the new economy is characterized by innovation, cutting-edge research, niche marketing, and techno-capitalism. What is therefore needed to support this knowledge-based economy is a pool of talent with highly specialized technical and intellectual skills to generate innovative ideas to steer the economy competitively. (Koh 2003, my emphasis)

It is that discursal 'taken for granted-ness' of the term that interests me. In the 14 years that have followed Koh's article, I was not able to find any autoethnographical accounts that center the notion of foreign talent-ness as a construct (though it is certainly implied on some level in expat narratives). I had been unaware of the term, until I already arrived in China. I was more familiar with terms like 'foreign recruit'. It wasn't the

‘foreign-ness’—the discourses Koh draws on around foreigners was no surprise to me; perhaps only slightly surprising was just how ubiquitously and impersonally the term was used in my presence, as a taken-for-granted identifier—that is so part of the neoliberal common sense (Torres 2011). It was and is the ‘talent’. The collinsdictionary.com definition is twofold:

1. Natural ability or qualities (synonyms: gift, natural endowment, endowment)
2. A person who possesses unusual innate ability in some field or activity

As strange as ‘skilled worker’ may sound, ‘skill’, again by the Collins dictionary definition, at least implies ‘an ability that has been acquired by training’, whereas, ‘talent’ is ‘natural’, ‘unusual’, and ‘innate’. This helps me understand why I feel a sense of fraudulence—indeed I am here because of formation (a translation of a word that I find to be a less neoliberal cousin alternative to ‘training’ in many languages)—not natural ability.

The second meaning—talent as a person—is much less common in popular discourses, and I argue that it particularly evokes an implied objectification and dehumanization. It appears to imply a ‘quality’ that someone might possess that would allow them to serve a ‘utilitarian’ purpose, to draw again on Koh (2003).

There is a wide range of ‘ambivalence’ and ‘subterranean tensions’ (Koh 2003) around this term. It cannot be reduced to be perceived as only negative—the implied ability in ‘talent’ is complicated—it may be used as a compliment, or that praise may be (subtle) sarcasm. Its cousin, ‘foreign expert’, used interchangeably in describing recruitment programs, can be similarly analyzed.

Since in a Bourdieuan sense, ‘words are never “value-neutral”, never used in isolation, but arise in contexts which need to be seen as dynamic social spaces where issues of power are always at stake’ (Grenfell 2012); it is important to highlight the problematic promise of ‘attracting’ the ‘talent’ as something that is ‘unique’ or ‘extraordinary’. Indeed, only with the right social capital can someone be labeled and displayed as a foreign talent. This promise is intertwined with the promise of improving rankings, which itself both implies and relies on related issues such as attracting students and funding. And as this ‘attraction’ is undoubtedly intertwined

with a 'talent's' economic reality, this raises issues of performing gratitude—who should be grateful to whom and how is this manifested in the mundane? How does the 'performance of gratitude' between the 'talent' that brings the 'promise' of these improvements and the local colleague and/or administrator perpetuate these power issues? How can this be translated to an understanding of students' performance of gratitude, as the majority are scholarship recipients?

Further considering this notion of 'foreign talent', Koh's conceptual framework around 'foreign bodies' is also highly useful:

I first begin the paper by analysing the competing and dissenting discourses surrounding the foreign talent policy to point to the ambivalent social positioning of foreign talent in Singapore's ethnoscape. In doing so, I will develop a new conceptual vocabulary to describe this new diaspora social formation of 'foreign bodies' whose identities are dislodged and disembedded from their homeland. I further argue that the presence and pressure of this new diversity and configuration of identities demonstrate that the mobility of migratory flow has transformative and disruptive effects at the level of culture and the identity landscape of Singapore, where its discursive cultural boundaries are drawn according to a nationalist framework. (Koh 2003)

Notions of performing as, to return to Koh, a 'foreign body' in this context, are woven into Meditation 6.

Finally, Koh importantly questions the idea of marginalization in thinking about foreign talent:

The identity of the foreigner is in a sense disembodied and discursively imbricated in what Brah (1996, p. 181) calls 'diaspora space' or, following Appadurai's (1996, p. 21), 'diasporic public sphere'.... While I posit that foreign talent occupies a discursive 'diaspora space' in the social imaginary, this does not suggest that the space is marginal or signifies the idea of 'minority', commonly underpinned with suggestions of discrimination and racialization. As I have argued earlier, those representing the foreign talent are empowered by their cultural capital. Therefore, while they may be a demographic minority along one dimension of differentiation, they may also be positioned and constructed as a majority in another. (Brah 1996)

I argue that ‘diasporic public space’ of heterogeneous foreign talent is one of mobility, literally and figuratively, in relationship to (1) citizens of the country of residence, (2) each other, and (3) spheres outside the country of residence. These relationships, including how power moves in the ‘diasporic public space’ of foreign talent, and performing as a ‘foreign body’ will be explored in the sections ahead. Adapting Rizvi (2011)’s discussion on the ‘multiple and changing meanings’ of ‘diaspora’, I would like to point out that the notion of ‘diasporic public space’ is ‘at best metaphoric’. In his analysis of the ‘Deakin Diaspora’ at Deakin University in Australia in the 1980s, he ‘invoke[s]’ the term ‘to suggest an assumed degree of convergence in scholarly pursuits and interests’. I would suggest that there are small ‘accidental diasporas’ in our university system. I use the term accidental because while I am not convinced at the long-term strategies of hiring processes, nor find it inclusive of/conducive to diverse lives/life situations, there are interesting pockets of converging scholarly pursuits and interests that I will continue to explore. But the ‘heterogeneity’ should not be overlooked; younger ‘foreign talents’ with precarious short-term contracts of nine-month living relying on university housing are in very different situations than senior ‘foreign talents’ even if the senior colleagues may also be living in university housing (of varying quality), perhaps with or without an owned home in another country, and perhaps with or without a partner that themselves may be more professionally established/mobile. And this is only in the realm of the university system; the notion of ‘foreign talent’ as inherent ability, the conditions in which ‘foreign talents’ are brought to China, and the performance of gratitude are, to again draw on Burke (2012), heavily classed, raced, and gendered.

Meditation 6: On Contradictions and Performativity

Perhaps it was a blessing in disguise that I waited until after the US election of Trump to merge the long notes I’ve been preparing for years into this chapter. I had forgotten the rich array of adjectives in the English language to describe fear, pain, and shock, expressions like *shell shocked*, *heartache*, *breathtakingly*, *heart on floor*, and ones I had never heard like

emotional arson. There isn't space here to discuss the complexities of my reaction to this election, through the lens of, on one side of my family, my own transgenerational history as a 10th generation Appalachian or daughter and granddaughter of activists and educators, nor, on another side of the family, of a critical mass of high-level (and highly heterogeneous) military veterans. But I want to begin this meditation by highlighting that my own history has been full of confronting and sorting through deep contradictions, which has proven fundamental to this notion of recognizing and exploring performativity and the deep contradictions and reductionist traps inherent in it.

I see foreign talentness as performative *a la* Butler (2008):

the essence or identity that they [acts, gestures, enactments] otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality... If the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity.

I believe that foreign talentness can be understood as a tension between the 'discourse of primary and stable identity' (a foreigner, here to 'internationalize') which are, in fact, just manufactured fabrications 'which constitute its reality'. I believe that there is a dialectic of performativity of foreign talentness in China *inside* of China and of foreign talentness in China *outside* of China, all subject to perverse privilege of being exoticized but also misrecognized. The American Educational Research Association (AERA) 'lottery' is an easy place to look. In response to a recent blinded panel proposal for the 2017 AERA conference, a follow-up on a previously successful panel, in which we alluded that we were international faculty (earlier career to senior) in China, focused on doing work on cross-border ethics *from* China, but not in all cases, *on* China, a reviewer stated:

I applaud your session's purpose to illuminate the power of southern epistemologies. However, your advocacy for southern epistemologies is lost through inaccessible language structures. It would behoove you to have an

English native speaker review your submission next time. I do not say this to discourage you at all. I celebrate your efforts to put your research into a broader forum. Your submission represents an academically important theme, but it falls short in its execution. What would have been particular interest is the relationship between Chinese epistemologies and southern epistemologies and how those epistemologies materialize in teaching and learning.

Here I think the most ‘inaccessible language “structure”’ would be that of condescension: (1) both about language and commentary on the topic that showed no reading of the proposal and (2) the reviewer makes an immediate assumption that we are focused *on* China. I asked the section heads, then, after receiving additional communication misrecognizing the situation, later the division heads to review the situation; it resulted in a conversation about screening these reviews for appropriateness. This is one of many such moments that my colleagues and I (native speakers of English or not) have experienced at first mention of an ‘exotic’ context.

There is also the experience of not being from a ‘real’ (read ‘Western’) university. I remember a student to whom I provided structured feedback to as part of a conference workshop confessing to me that he felt ‘deflated’ after my feedback. It is impossible to untangle how much of this was tied into my geographic location, gender identity, and/or perceived age (same as his). Unsurprisingly, men of my peer group are often the ones who most often try to ‘put me in my place’.

These ‘disconnections’ that others experience around my identity are all illustrative of how I experience misrecognition (Meditation 7).

Meditation 7: On Positivism

In performing foreign talentness, Holliday’s work has been particularly useful to me on two fronts. First, I want to be ‘not just passing through’ China, but, as a postfoundational critical and feminist scholar, I find intellectual sustainability (Meditation 8) here challenging (this is not dissimilar to many other contexts). I conceptualize this issue in terms of Holliday’s discussion of the (global) positivist trap (Holliday 2013), in

which it is not 'the West' *vs. everyone else* but instead about entrenched positivism. Holliday reflects on positivism in the context of academic writing:

I maintain that what these writers describe is, in fact, an experience not so much with Western universities *per se*, but with Western universities, journals or supervisors who subscribe to a particular research paradigm. In contrast to the more open postmodern paradigm described above, they have encountered a positivist paradigm that is less able to accommodate the diversity they describe. It may also be possible that these writers are themselves influenced by a positivist paradigm of 'culture' that encourages notions of cultural incompatibility.... I will argue that both of these reasons derive from a sustained dominance of a positivist view both of qualitative research and of culture and that this dominance is not so much to do with a conflict between the West and the non-West but with a conflict that is also taking place within the West. (Holliday 2013)

I see this subscri[ption] to the positivist paradigm in the university system here, and a misrecognized conflating of the expectations of what my own work is/should be within this paradigm, which is also a misrecognition of the spaces that *do* exist beyond the 'global positivist trap'.

Despite the diversity of spaces, like our colleagues everywhere,

the danger is that we become transparent but empty, unrecognizable to ourselves in a life enabled by and lived against measurement. More and more in education and other parts of the public sector, our days are numbered—literally. (Ball 2015)

There is heavy siloing in the system here, which means that it is challenging for actors in the system to have a holistic understanding of the reality of the foreign professor; I also find there to be a blind fixation on certain conceptualizations of output assessments that often lead to demoralizing moments of misrecognition. Nor is it about issues of academic freedom in China, this has largely been a nonissue in my teaching and research (in fact, I believe that in many contexts, I am encouraged to be open by others because of my privileged, and *double-standard-ed* sta-

tus). But it is a stifling sense of siloed-positivism throughout the system regarding research.

Second, engaged pedagogy—progressive, holistic education that emphasizes well-being as an added layer to conventional critical and feminist pedagogy (hooks 1994)—is misrecognized by various actors in the system for a variety of reasons rooted in positivist and scientific epistemologies. For example, I met a student (Chinese, woman, young) at a conference who showed me a paper she had written about her professor's (Chinese, man, older) openness to 'dialogue' about gender inequality with her; she told me he had helped her conclude that gender equality wasn't an issue in their institutional context. I wrote the memo to myself:

The student has mistaken the professor's 'dialogue's as problem-posing, when in fact the professor is sub/consciously (?) manipulating the student back to a binary conclusion, reproducing inequalities both in terms of form and content.

Yet, perhaps seemingly contradictory, I have reflected heavily on the potential for 'over-engaged pedagogy' and the challenges when I teach engaged pedagogy in terms of my own emotional labor.

Meditation 8: On Intellectual Ceiling

When asked how long I plan to stay in China, which is something I am asked nearly every few weeks (or few hours at conference) my response is 'until I hit an intellectual ceiling'. This is the truest response that I can think of and it is based on two concepts: (1) attempting to avoid creating/perpetuating a *me vs. China* mentality or that I am telling a secret that I would keep from colleagues in my institution and (2) positioning myself as an intellectual, not fixated on external validation. The intellectual ceiling can be defined as a state in which boundaries on my creativity, and on possibilities and spaces to learn, no longer feel worthwhile, useful, and/or possible to overcome. The conditions of this 'ceiling', depending on how it is defined and by whom, may even encompass the famous 'academic freedom', itself a term in the Chinese context that requires more serious unpacking than possible in this chapter.

This answer aims to subvert currents of positivism that perhaps would even be more comfortable if I oriented myself as a careerist who was just passing through for a few lines on my CV.

Second, I regularly return to Holliday's notion of 'small culture', an attempt to liberate 'culture' from notions of ethnicity and national and from the perceptual dangers they carry with them (Holliday (1999)).

I intend to view the spaces I am moving in as 'small cultures'—not able to be essentialized on a large scale (as the adapted adage goes, when you've lived one experience, you've lived *one* experience; that is, the experience cannot be generalized). But this isn't a piece about the tensions between *internationalizing* and *assimilating* (relatively empty terms that people use in conversations with me) or about the contradictions between the local and global games. There are plenty of papers to be written solely on misrecognition, as systematically, foreign colleagues are often discursively isolated from their research agendas. For example, I have observed that if a group of colleagues is introduced in a meeting, the Chinese colleagues' research interests will be announced; however, the foreign colleagues are announced as 'here to internationalize'; in a conference when it was clear this was about to happen, another foreign colleague cheekily said to me: 'prepare to be diminished'. Having one's identity reduced to a part of an (instrumentalist) process is misrecognition (Burke 2012; Fraser 2005) 101.

Meditation 9: On Perverse Privilege

I use the word 'perverse privilege' on a weekly basis to describe the warped nature of my positionality; I think of perverse from the Collinsdictionary.com definition of perverse as synonymous with 'contrary' ('very opposed in nature or character or purpose; so related that both cannot be true but both may be false'). Sometimes I use it to refer to extreme privilege that is coexisting with extreme challenge (I prefer challenge to a more direct antonym such as disadvantage because part of the perverseness is that the conditions may exist to convert the challenge into a privilege). One example may be foreign faculty's relationship to grants (an issue I explore in Meditation 11). In Burke (2012)'s conclusion of her section on her

‘embodied identities’, an analysis which incorporates Foucault’s ‘practices of the self’ and Bourdieu’s concept of habitus and other scholars’ analysis of these concepts, notes,

The concept of embodied identities emphasises the working of power and difference and the ways that these are marked and inscribed on the body, as well as resisted or subverted through ‘practices of the self’.... Embodied identity helps to think through the ways different bodies take up and use the different higher education spaces available, and the ways that higher education spaces are constructed and re/shaped in relation to the different bodies that move through and are positioned within them.

As I am, to adopt the quote above, ‘positioned’ and ‘regulated’ (or not) ‘in relation to complex inequalities across space’ as a foreign talent, I embody ‘perverse privilege’. While class, race, citizenship, age, gender orientation/expression, and sexual orientation may all converge in manifestations of privilege or they may be the source of uninformed tension and hostility.

Meditation 10: On Co-visibility

This is a riff on the classic combination of embodying the deafening objectification that comes from hypervisibility at the same time as invisibility of the ‘foreign talent’ that I very regularly refer to as ‘co-visibility’:

Cue scene at conference: Me (in Chinese): ‘If you can speak a little bit slower, I will understand much more.’ Smile, translation by one person to the group from my Chinese into native-speaker Chinese, group laugh, a sentence at the same speed as before. Resume (out of nervousness) native speaker conversation, talking across me, about me.

Normalizing foreign talents in the system seems to bounce between a *comrade* and ‘special snowflake’, but short-term foreign faculty at conferences and universities enjoy a highlighted version, both positively and negatively of the hypervisibility and likely the same invisibility. It should be noted that short-term foreign faculty may refer to

people who have been coming and going from China since the 1970s or who are on their first visit; this length of time having a relationship 'with China', being 'a friend of X university' does not necessarily have any relationship to the person's inclusion into conversations and/or knowledge of Chinese.

The hypervisibility is also manifested through classic Foucauldian surveillance, namely, cameras in classroom and human monitors that come to check and report if we are in the classroom (and I have seen them report, unaware of the reasons why people are *not* in the classroom). Burke notes that,

Foucauldian post-structural perspectives offer an alternative and compelling perspective of power, understanding it as productive, dynamic, intimately bound to, and inseparable from, knowledge and potentially transformative... (Burke 2012). Thus power produces subjects of and in (and outside of) higher education contexts. Foucault's concept of disciplinary power is the 'inversion of visibility' and compulsory objectification' in which the subject of disciplinary power is made constantly visible through the normalizing gaze (Burke 2012)... Foucault's work... helps to understand both the complex, subtle, invisible and insidious working of power on the self and on the body. However, his work also helps us to imagine possibilities beyond this, ways of being and doing that not only go beyond but also destabilize hegemonic discourses... these might focus on transformatory practices and relations that aim to alter subjectivities and knowledges. (Burke 2012)

Sometimes I need to employ humor as a coping strategy for myself and the students, some of whom associate cameras with cameras and/or other forms of surveillance past traumatic collective or individual events in their lives or are uneasy with confronting them for the first time (since we are all funded by the national government). Hooks (2010)'s is useful here:

...sharing the power of humour as a force in the classroom that enhances learning and helps to create and sustain bonds of community. Working together in the classroom, teachers and students find equanimity when we laugh together.

Furthermore, telling this story to a colleague in the UK at the 2015 Gender and Education Association (GEA) conference, she reminded of the growing presence of cameras in classrooms worldwide, which, although I am living it here, is why I am careful to say this is not just a ‘China problem’.

Meditation 11: On ‘Chinese’ and ‘Foreign’ Colleagues, Discoursal and Material Binaries?

I am often interviewed by students about services for foreign faculty and students in China for various reasons; I have received guidance from senior feminist colleagues in other contexts to remember to consider ways to focus on the system to avoid deficit thinking about anyone in the system. Recently, in a written interview with a PhD student that was shared openly in a class, I noted:

I believe it is very important to look at the issue structurally, instead of focusing on individuals. So I would say that throughout China, I would welcome ISOs (International Student Offices) having more opportunities to travel abroad to learn more about the home countries of the student populations they are serving. I believe they would also welcome this opportunity, if they have not yet had one. Otherwise, it is very hard to understand the lived experiences of the students. In the case of X University an opportunity to spend time in Ghana, Tanzania, or Pakistan, for example, could be invaluable, both to them and to the students....

...[Finally,] I am weary of some of the top-down cultural activities that the CSC ((national) China Scholarship Council) imposes on the ISO to carry out—it is not the ISO’s fault, but these ‘cultural nights’ when students (including Chinese citizens) ‘present’ their countries need to be very nuanced and not just ‘walk around and look at the foreigner/Chinese person’; otherwise, I find it exoticizes and ‘Others’ the students, even if they feel it is a fun celebration. I often find it disturbing and feel it perpetuates the separation of foreigners/Chinese when not done with a lot of dialogue, time for people to really get to know each other (which would involve translators), etc.

This later case again ties into the notion of performing gratitude. Specifically, when students (and faculty) are receiving money from the Chinese government, these sorts of activities—despite being highly problematic—may feel obligatory, particularly from the perspective of students who are experiencing particularly unequal power relationships on the receiving end of the financing bodies.

Attempting to bridge the discursive divide, I often say to both Chinese and foreigners, 'I try not to say my *Chinese* colleague, as all my colleagues are Chinese except for a few exceptions'.

Cue scene: Student: 'Chinese professors always [insert essentialising, negative characteristic in relationship to an experience the student has had] ...' Me [trying to convey a non-condescending tone both here in written text and in the spoken dialogue]: Long discussion of the situation, acknowledging that the student has lived a painful experience: 'just as we want for those around not to essentialized us, we need to be careful not to essentialize those around us, either. Let's consider how we can get beyond using those generalizing words.'

Yet this only goes so far, because there are real material divides that depart from the extreme privilege side (versus the extreme challenge side) of this perverse privilege.

One of the major material divides are salaries (and their implied mobility). These are a touchy subject as discussions of salary/contracts may be much less private than certain foreign talents' home context, though on a micro level might be just as private. This can lead to feelings of shaming which must be negotiated as a classic issue of cross-cultural sensitivity. The funding schemes to recruit and 'retain' foreign talents are different than that of Chinese colleagues, with Chinese colleagues having baseline salaries much lower than their foreign counterparts. Yet the foreign faculty experience may be punctuated by lack of access to principal investigator opportunities on national grant schemes, consulting money and other bonuses, long delays of taxed reimbursements, and foreign debt and financial responsibilities due to numerous issues back at 'home'. Regarding the former, the national-government-centered research funding base here appears to me as an outsider to echo Leberman et al. (2016)'s

illuminating piece on women's experience with the research process in New Zealand, equally illuminatingly titled, 'Unless you are collaborating with a big name successful professor, you are unlikely to receive funding'. This is an almost unavoidable elephant in the national 'room', and Chinese and foreign colleagues may be sensitive to each other's sensitivity to discuss this. As Koh notes,

Much as Singaporeans are convinced of the need to attract foreign talent to Singapore, they are ambivalent about the presence of foreign talent. My analysis of popular discourses from the media has shown the subterranean tensions that underlie state arguments and discourses on foreign talent. (Koh 2003, my emphasis)

This ambivalence and subterranean tensions are part of the perverseness of this privilege, the way this privilege 'feels'. But that the privilege might 'feel' perverse is not necessarily negative because this catalyzes self-reflection. And it is worth re/emphasizing here the heterogeneity of foreign talent and the way that power is fluid.

Conclusion

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, the choppiness of this chapter may lead to the impression that I have not explored much in depth. That is a fair critique. Indeed, this irregular—guerrilla—tactic of bouncing between forms to not linger too long on situations that may still be going on, and which may be deeply painful for me and others around me, was a methodological and ethical choice. At this point, I see it as all I can offer to the conversation while I am still in it. Perhaps my positionality will shift even before this book is published; that is the nature of the perverse privilege. There is a privilege in autoethnography of the shorter term visiting foreign professor to China or to any place—the risks are, of course, lower. Yet I should also note that my voice is relatively privileged in terms of sensitivity (that something 'too sensitive' is an often taken-for-granted explanation for something that is declared a nonstarter in my context but

is a term which I argue requires more nuancing; I am exploring 'sensitivity' as it relates to global citizenship education in 'hard spaces' in another book (Misiasek 2018, forthcoming).

In this chapter, through a series of notes and meditations, I have attempted to use 'real-time' *autoethnography* as a strategy of possibilities and proposals for more critical spaces of 'speaking into the listening', to use the language of council circles (Provisor, no date)—speaking in spaces where all actors, including the foreign professor, feel heard. And I have pointed out situations about student psycho-social-emotional needs that more urgently require addressing. I have noted that this form of autoethnography offers possibilities to highlight these needs of international students.

How I embody the global neoliberal university system, in all its contractions and uneven negotiations in this context, is *messy*—indeed I remember a reviewer of one of my earlier articles being turned off by the informal-ness of the word. But I choose this term purposefully because I believe that it is that informal-ness—the mundane—that slowly weaves itself into the web that becomes a lived and embodied experience. While *messy* may be perceived as 'low-brow' descriptor, these are often 'low-brow' experiences. These experiences are well-spun and presented in their 'high-brow' form when 'performing the "world-class" university' is required, but disrupting the narrative, as this chapter set out to do, is required to get a glimpse beyond these façades.

Acknowledgments I thank the editors for exemplifying what a positive publication experience can look like in terms of unflinching support and constructive feedback. I thank Greg Misiasek for being my first reader. I owe an intellectual debt to Robert Tierney. I thank Lorin Yochim for trying on ideas. I thank all the BNU students and other NU students in China who read the final draft - from Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe. All of your feedback - a "member check" of sorts - gives me the confidence to share these reflections. I thank all my colleagues who gave me feedback in conferences and other spaces. Finally, I would like to thank everyone at BNU for their support - 非常感谢.

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Writing Yourself In? The Price of Playing the (Feminist) Game in the Neoliberal University

Sarah Burton

This chapter examines the centrality of writing in how feminist women academics engage with the neoliberal university. In this, I focus on the experiences of UK sociologists and question the extent to which feminist positions are able to ‘become’, ‘arrive’, or assert themselves as legitimate within the academy. Orienting itself around specific accounts of how sociologists negotiate the demands of the Research Excellence Framework (REF),¹ the chapter looks at narratives of affect in writing practices and how these relate to the production of knowledge understood as legitimate within the discipline. In doing so, the chapter raises the provocative question of how far it is really possible to ‘write oneself in’ to academia? The discussions here build on scholarship examining the often precarious place of the ‘early career’ feminist researcher in global higher education spaces (Thwaites and Pressland 2017), as well as that which considers the classed experiences of creating and narrating ‘value’ in research (Addison 2012). Within this context, this chapter engages with the experiences of

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feminists in the academy, to ask to what extent is it feasible for a feminist position to be a legitimate(d) position.

The research in this chapter is based on an ethnographic study of the relationship between the craft of writing and the production of legitimate knowledge and personhood in sociology. The fieldwork was undertaken over the course of a year, as part of my doctoral thesis. There were ten central participants in the ethnography (in addition to nine initial gatekeepers)—four women and six men—and all were employed in sociology departments in the UK. Participants were selected across career stages, with some only a few years out of their Ph.D. study and others holding professorships and emeritus positions. The chapter here focuses on the accounts of three of the women participants—Naomi, Johanna, and Kate. Both Naomi and Johanna are Professors of Sociology—though Johanna was newly promoted during the fieldwork, and this shift in her institutional power formed the basis of numerous discussions. Kate is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology and, at the time of the fieldwork, had just returned to full-time work following maternity leave. All of them identify as feminists and assert their daily professional practice as feminist-informed. Of these three, only Johanna works with an explicit feminist element in her research.

As with the other participants, I met with Kate, Johanna, and Naomi on a monthly (sometimes more or less frequently) basis. During these meetings we discussed works in progress, as well as writing and publishing in sociology more broadly. Our conversations were oriented to their relationship to sociology, their writing and their position in the field—particularly how they understood writing practice in relation to being a (legitimate) sociologist. These discussions were important in allowing Naomi, Johanna, and Kate to articulate their perceptions of privileged or legitimated writing forms and styles. Meetings with participants often reflected on the affective and emotional aspects of writing—and this was particularly the case with the women in this chapter, who used the space to articulate experiences of being a working-class woman in academia (Johanna), a woman of colour in academia (Naomi), and the way in which structural inequalities of gender become magnified through being both an academic and a mother (Kate). Throughout the ethnography, Naomi, Kate, and Johanna's accounts drew out the ways in which writing

can be used as a mobilisation of privilege—but most pertinently, identified how they are able to both co-opt and resist this technology of legitimation through their own writing practice.

We maintained regular contact outside of meetings: Naomi, Kate, and Johanna would send drafts of work or final copies, some sent me regular diary-style updates or personal reflections on their practical and affective relationship with writing and with sociology. The meetings themselves took place in cafés, university offices, participants' homes, and outside. The informality of our meetings supported the disclosure of increasingly intimate and difficult stories of negotiating academia and the sedimented structures of 'race', class, and gender which intersect and inform the everyday experiences of being a feminist in the academy. In conducting the ethnography over the course of a year, I was able to track the processual nature of crafting writing and the personal, emotional, professional, and practical stages involved. What this chapter presents, then, is the emotional, physical, and intellectual work taken to sustain performances of disciplinary legitimacy—and how this labour is especially refracted through concomitant commitment to feminist practice and experience of gender inequality and discrimination.

Throughout the analysis I attempt to foreground the words of the participants. As such, I often present the ethnography in terms of extended stories from the fieldwork. Storying is important here in being attentive to this data both as representing the lived experiences of real people with complex lives and backstories, as well as showing my interpersonal interactions, reciprocity, and immersion in participant relationships and shared spaces. Working with a more literary bent to the writing allows me to be attentive to the role of the personal—something Carol Smart recognises is at risk in the writing up of academic research. Smart notes that 'constraints of certain academic disciplinary conventions—and here I am specifically thinking of sociological writing' mean that 'the richness of lives is omitted from written accounts' (2013: 61). Like Smart, I wish to make my data analysis rich with the voices of participants and, by allowing their narratives to speak for themselves, avoid the trap of unreflexively placing participants' experiences into standard social and cultural structures. In addition to this storied aspect of the data, all participants have been anonymised and given pseudonyms.

Kate, Naomi, and Johanna's stories indicate that women in academia take a number of steps in order to pragmatically navigate the requirements of the neoliberal university and the concomitant personal and political positions of feminism. I explore the way in which these women recognise the dual game of mainstream academic and feminist practice and the modes through which they engage with these. The chapter shows how these women use writing both to demonstrate fidelity to mainstream sociological legitimacy whilst also satisfying their feminist political aims. Participants identified feminist practice as including activities such as citation practice, and publishing and promoting the work of women—especially women of colour. Another participant, Maria, termed this 'the politics of production' and argued that it is a key way of establishing feminists as academics. On an everyday level, this feminist praxis was found in the organisation of reading and writing groups, sustained support for colleagues, and pedagogical decisions about how and who to teach. What unites these actions is a sense of organisation, commitment, and solidarity. Whilst men in the ethnography shared practical elements of this, they lacked a shared notion that this was done as part of cohesive political action or that they were beholden to it. By contrast, feminists in the ethnography spoke of experiencing guilt and shame in situations where they couldn't or didn't offer this form of organised political support.

Analyzing this dynamic use of writing reveals the fragile grip of feminist positions in the academy. Crucially, the chapter demonstrates this fragility exists both in terms of intellectual framing as well as professional positions. Kate, Naomi, and Johanna's accounts show how feminist positions work in paradoxical and contradictory ways—as supportive, generative, and creative, but also demanding of onerous and time-consuming emotional labour, thus arguably disadvantaging the feminist academic. Through examination of how affective working practices enable or interrupt a sociologist's ability to understand themselves as legitimate, this chapter argues that the price feminist academics pay for a seat at the table is a costly one of exhaustion, self-doubt, and unwilling co-option into hegemonic practices. I begin by discussing conceptions of legitimacy in academia and subsequently build on this to show how these concerns emerge in participants' writing strategies. Through this I show how feminist academics consider both their political commitments and the

neoliberal conditions in which they write. However, I attempt to end on a note of hope: though feminist positions are undoubtedly shown here as tenuous and vulnerable, what chinks of light exist in the agentive and powerful ways the women in this chapter assert in their steps to survive—and thrive—in the neoliberal university? In what ways might attentiveness to the narratives of this difficult and precarious work show small beginnings of change in the academy?

Legitimacy in Academia

A key driver of the production and designation of legitimacy in academia is a strong relationship between disciplinarity, canonicity, and privileged structural positions (Burton 2016). Underpinning the stories of the research participants in this chapter is a particular value paradigm which privileges the work, ideas, and voices of those who are male, white, and middle class. This paradigm shapes the field of sociology (and academia more broadly), including the type of knowledge claims which can be made legitimate within sociology. This structural and intellectual inequality has been noted as significant in the origin story of sociology (Connell 2007), the bifurcation of Black Studies from a ‘mainstream’ tradition of sociology (Bhambra 2014), the Eurocentrism of sociology’s conception of modernity (Bhambra 2007a, b), and the centrality of ‘founding fathers’ in the social theory canon (Marshall and Witz 2004). The presence of this value paradigm forms specific modes of structural social inequality and exclusion within sociology. Both Kate Hoskins (2010) and Diane Reay (2000) discuss the way in which academic spaces form hostile environments for working-class scholars, especially those who are also women and people of colour. Similarly, Kate Sang’s (2016) research elucidates the way in which black feminist women academics experience an intersectional exclusion (Crenshaw 1989, 1991) on the grounds of ‘race’ and gender but also report feeling excluded from supposedly progressive feminist spaces within the academy, thus pointing to the way narratives of intersectionality may be strongly employed as rhetoric but do not always result in more equal access or practices of diversity and inclusion.

These exclusions also filter conceptual and philosophical frameworks of knowledge. Kathryn Maude (2014) and Sara Ahmed (2013) note how citation practice is used to uphold the dominance of white male thinkers across disciplinary canons; relatedly, I have argued elsewhere that the conception of the ‘universal’ in social theory favours the promotion of white men—owing to the ability of this group to subtly and quietly present themselves as neutral and representing universal positions (Burton 2015). Patricia Hill Collins writes of the way in which

elite White men control Western structures of knowledge validation, their interests pervade the themes, paradigms, and epistemologies of traditional scholarship. As a result, US Black women’s experiences as well as those of women of African descent transnationally have been routinely distorted within or excluded from what counts as knowledge. (Hill Collins 1990 [2000]: 407)

Analysis from feminist, queer, and race studies demonstrates a relationship between ‘legitimacy’ and how sociologists practise the discipline—particularly in terms of epistemological and ontological positions (Ahmed 2010, 2014; Bhabra 2007a; Felski 2015; hooks 1989). It is important to make the link between the gendered and racialized production of canonical disciplinary value systems and the extension of this hegemonic white male power to organising the value system of the neoliberal university. Clare Hemmings notes a similar machination in the repeated closing down of feminist, women’s studies, and queer studies degree programmes and departments. She writes that ‘In institutional terms the broader discursive positioning of feminism as misguided, limited, or anachronistic...makes academic feminism extremely vulnerable’ (Hemmings 2011: 10). Not only are the intellectual positions and institutional spaces inhabited by feminism unequally authorised within the value system of sociology as a discipline, this lack of value is preyed upon by the neoliberal university.

Ana Cristina Santos identifies that the main criteria for judging the ‘worth’ of an academic—citation metrics, the winning of grant money—are related to successful practising of positivist ontology (Santos 2014: 9) and notes further how ‘[i]n mainstream academia, gender and LGBT/

queer—as fields of studies—are confronted with the need for constant validation and re-legitimation’ (2014: 17). These marginal fields—which extend to disability, race, and ethnicity studies—are continually demanded to prove they deserve their seat at the table. Within the context of undergoing audits, both in research and teaching, being understood as producing or engaging with scholarship in a central and valued space of the discipline is vital to showing oneself as intellectually legitimate. The accounts of the women in this chapter point to the ongoing quality of these contests for (potential) legitimacy as sociological knowledge makers. They most particularly demonstrate feminist sociologists as needing to embed themselves in the central spaces of the discipline in order to make the case for the value of a feminist sociology. Academia always already arrives as a space which is classed, gendered, and racialized; it exists as a terrain which is deeply hostile to particular bodies and social identifications whilst putting others at a distinct advantage. The conditions of the neoliberal university exploit and deepen this inequality. The narratives in the following section, however, show feminist practice in academia as both fragile and agentive. The chapter demonstrates audit cultures as part of wider structures of sexism within academia, but it also points to ways in which feminists resist, challenge, and upturn this dominant power.

Being Feminist in the Academy: Dual Dances of Legitimacy

The concomitant power and fragility of feminist practice and women academics in the neoliberal university is shown forcefully in accounts of everyday lived experiences. Les Back comments that attentiveness to the everyday, to the small and the mundane, allows us to see ‘what is at stake in our daily encounters’ (2015: 821), and it is from this perspective that I offer the following personal narratives. In this section, I focus on the ways in which women in sociology use writing to negotiate the demands of the Research Excellence Framework and other internal institutional audits. In doing so, I show how they experience the conditions of the

neoliberal university as gendered. Further to this, I indicate the disparity between the value system of academic feminism and ‘mainstream’ sociology, highlighting the way that participants in my doctoral research understood themselves as seeking professional and intellectual legitimacy through multiple—often contradictory—value paradigms. Through this, I draw attention to the way that mainstream sociological legitimation sits within the dominant white, male tradition but also the way in which these are the qualities and practices privileged and rewarded within audit culture.

Kate’s experience shows why it is necessary to be attentive to key issues of time and emotional labour when considering the opportunity for feminist positions to be legitimate academic positions. Her story pushes to the fore the deeply gendered and (hetero)normative experience of being a parent in academia; it suggests that parenting itself is not especially problematic—rather, the role of the ‘good mother’ and the conventionally gendered expectations of this (in academia but also society more broadly) conflict with the value paradigm underpinning the concept of scholarship in itself. At the beginning of my ethnography, Kate had just returned from maternity leave and her daughter had recently had her first birthday. About five months into my research, I met with Kate in her office. As I knocked on the door, Kate waved me in but stayed glued to her email—she was sorting out a particularly delicate negotiation of her own research. Waiting for her to finish I noticed that she looked particularly chic—a haircut and sharp outfit had given her a glow. Despite this she looked pained. As she turned to me, I asked her how she was—a general friendly inquiry rather than a pointed research question. Even before she spoke, I could see the anxiety in her face—I thought she might simply burst into tears. There was a bit of a pause and she replied, straight off, no lead in: ‘I’m really struggling with managing an academic career with parenting. There’s so little time, especially with starting a new research project. And it’s just the constant upheaval of having a small child’. Kate had taken it on herself to attempt to create a positive space for writing by ensconcing herself on a regular basis in a university library for several days a week. However, Kate identified that things come up and need to be dealt with then and there: this disrupts both her work and her parenting schedule and then she is ‘on the back foot with both’. This

experience emphasises the way in which the practice of writing shapes the gendered quality of the academy: highlighting the necessity of isolation, time, focus, and concentration required to produce written work is vital in understanding how the value system, and practical effects of this, works to exclude women academics in various ways. Kate brought up her calendar on her computer and showed me. Almost every day was filled with meetings at her institution or field site visits away from home—‘and of course you can’t write in between’, she said. Kate needs clear days to write—she requires calm space in which to orient herself entirely towards writing. Though Kate has goals of writing days in the library, field work whilst her daughter is in nursery, and adhering to the agreement of ‘home by 5pm’, these are ‘all in negotiation’ with her partner. Within this context, Kate’s opportunity to write work of the quantity and quality deemed necessary to protect oneself within audit culture is severely diminished. Kate’s confession marked a key moment in the ethnography; until this point she presented as highly successful and incredibly competent—and she undoubtedly is—but the revelation of the toll taken to perform this position was significant in drawing attention to the crucial role of feeling legitimate within academia, and the way in which performing competency and sophistication is central to this.

Rachel Hile Bassett notes that the culture of academia, exemplified in ‘the work that never ends, the rigidly prescribed hierarchical career structure, the emphasis on competition and individual achievement’ (Hile Bassett 2005: 1; see also Armstrong and Armstrong 2001), rather than the actual work itself, ultimately prevents holding a visible caregiving role and performing as a legitimate and credentialised academic. Caregiving, in this case motherhood—but we could also think of caring for family, partners, friends (Roseneil and Budgeon 2004)—is not legitimated in this value paradigm. This culture must be recognised as particularly masculine and patriarchal. The focus on competition and individual achievement that Bassett identifies, as well as the time and space to complete the work that never ends, assumes an academic subject who is able to devote his time to these endeavours.

The structural differences as regards feminist practice within the academy versus the way men support one another highlight the disparity of gender and the inequalities faced. Kate elaborated on this, noting that women ‘always have more ground to make up [than men]’. She cited

‘feminist collective practice’ and noted how laborious this is: ‘when people instrumental to your career ask you to do a conference, I want to support them, but when I have to pull out, go home early, or I end up writing on the morning, I then feel flakey, I feel bad’. Kate indicates a reluctance to ‘let people down’, because it would act contrary to her principles of feminist support. She paralleled this with how she sees men behave at conferences: ‘boys running in crowds, they bolster one another. Their sense of obligation to one another is different—they say no and don’t apologise. Even the early career boys are in a position of relative power’. Kate brought this back to the gendered experience of being a parent in academia, noting that ‘we [women] can’t play the game like men’. Her description of being a mother in academia is in stark contrast to her experiences of seeing how men who are fathers are treated. Kate asserted that

having children in academia is detrimental to women’s careers and positive to men’s. [Men’s] kids are revered, they’re considered special and prized for taking care of their children, whereas if you leave a conference or a meeting early as a woman, you’re judged. There’s a real double-standard—children become buy-outs for men. Their children actually give them more time.

Kate further expressed disbelief at the notion that ‘all men saying they’re leaving early for the children actually do any hands on care when they get home...it’s an excuse, a way of leaving early to buy more time for work’. Her analysis mirrors that of Hunter and Leahy, writing about parenting and academia in the physical sciences, who assert that ‘science is a “greedy institution” that makes total claims on scientists’ membership and attempts to encompass the whole personality’ (Hunter and Leahy 2010: 435; citing Grant et al. 2000). This leaves little space for any care-giving role and further evidences the assertion that academic practice is oriented to the goals of the individual; thus to be legitimate within this framework, one must be viewed as dedicated and productive. Hunter and Leahy further note that ‘children are likely to have an adverse effect on both productivity and visibility’ (Hunter and Leahy 2010: 434). Having children arguably prevents attainment of the ideal worker in that it circumvents productivity and being visibly devoted whilst simultaneously

showing priorities outside of academia. What is vital to recognise is the gender difference—that motherhood and fatherhood are enacted, perceived, and policed differently and unequally.

The affect of the neoliberal university on considerations of legitimacy is also found within the ontological space of research practice. Naomi described how she felt compelled by the strictures and value system of the REF to significantly alter her work so that it would be accepted as legitimate. Naomi conveyed how she feels that her work as an ethnographer is not readily understood by the parameters for ‘research outputs’ that her department requires she adhere to for the REF. As such her plan is to produce four ‘outputs’ which can be submitted for the REF and then return to her ‘own’ writing. This perception, and tactical approach, alters the way Naomi writes and how she thinks about her own writing. Naomi talked about how the REF ‘forces writing and the amount that you write’. Already Naomi is thinking of REF 2021. She looked quite pained, frustrated, and resigned as she explained that she doesn’t want to work to the REF but ‘has to be ready for it’. Naomi expressed concern that the pace of academic life and time constraints of academia make it hard to get ‘REF-ready and maintain your real work’. She feels the pressing nature of ‘pace and time’—that one must work with a sense of urgency. The perceived constraints of the REF did not just influence the sort of work Naomi produced—the privileging of the ‘more boring’ REF-appropriate work in an already busy timetable—it also affected how Naomi felt within the space of academia. She noted that ‘women of colour academics are always under more scrutiny’, and the REF escalates and intensifies this. Moreover, the values enshrined by the REF shaped where Naomi chose to publish—which in turn altered how she wrote the article in question. Describing one particular publishing decision, Naomi told me that she felt under pressure to put a particular article into a mainstream sociology journal because ‘doing well in the REF is about where you publish as well as what you publish’. However, this is not only a decision of publication site but also of how Naomi then had to write the piece. Changing the publication to a mainstream journal meant changing the way Naomi approached the piece. Thus, in her actions, there is evidence that sociologists—particularly women/women of colour—understand mainstream disciplinary spaces as dominated by white, male concerns.

Attempting to become part of these spaces means altering how feminist research practice is presented within writing.

Having been systematically excluded from academic knowledge formation, at levels of ontology and structure, women—especially women of colour—are positioned at a greater distance from the (imagined) centre than white male colleagues. This situation is exacerbated by a contradictory condition in which the very presence of women of colour in academic spaces is often viewed as the endpoint in equality and diversity achievement: their very existence silences the racialised structures of the institutional or intellectual space. Sara Ahmed identifies this in relation to institutional whiteness and the debilitating affect of reading the appearance of black and brown bodies in education as a sign of successful diversity: ‘Any success is read as a sign of an overcoming of institutional whiteness: “Look, you’re here!”, “Look, look!”’ (Ahmed 2012: 203). Because of this, subsequently pointing out the piercing scrutiny of black and brown academics and the racialised structures of the academy is read as ingratitude: ‘Our talk about racism is read as a form of stubbornness, paranoia or even melancholia, as if we are holding on to something (whiteness) that our arrival shows has already gone’ (Ahmed 2012: 203). And so, the voices of people of colour are silenced and a (white) equilibrium is reasserted. These are the conditions under which Naomi attempts to write herself into spaces of sociology. To story herself in this manner is both to externalise a perception of herself as obeying the rules of the (racialised, gendered) game and to draw attention to herself as storied. Here, she shows the gap between her preferred writing practice and what is compelled of her professionally. Her multiple narratives of self and writing show that this is as a way of dealing with racism and sexism in spaces of sociology.

This negotiation of space is complex because of the intersection of identities and ‘acceptable’ modes of practising these social locations. Katherine Sang’s research shows that ‘ethnic minority women academics feel marginalised as women in the Academy, and further marginalised as black academics within academic feminism’. The ‘structural racism of the feminist movement’ is further elaborated by Alison Phipps (2016: 3). Phipps details how privileged feminists assert authority over experiential stories of oppression and in doing so silence women in more marginal

positions, such as women of colour, transwomen, and sex workers. Phipps focuses on how political action has coalesced around telling stories of the self, but notes that these stories—and their emotional affect—are often co-opted as capital in political movements antithetical to their original telling. Indeed, Phipps explains that, ‘Experience is deployed by privileged feminists (frequently in association with conservative agendas), who wield particular narratives to generate emotion and make political gains’ (Phipps 2016: 6). As Phipps says, ‘These dynamics also flatten out lived realities so they cannot be appropriated by the other side... Those with differing experiences of the same phenomenon are unable to co-exist, and there is also little space within the individual for mixed or ambivalent feelings to endure’ (Phipps 2016: 11). Though Smith and Hill Collins both point to the creation of other sites of practice—women’s studies, feminism, black women’s studies—more attuned and welcoming to white women and women of colour, it is necessary to recognise that intersecting oppressions also operate in this putatively progressive spaces. Furthermore, the different ways that different women are able to enter and use these spaces draws attention to the mobility of spaces—darting in and out of accessibility. It also shows the dynamism of the hegemonic, in that what is commonly understood as located with and of white men, is also present and active in spaces of women/feminism. It is this complex patterning of sociology spaces, born from the influence of social structures, which further leads me to conceptualise feminist positions within the neoliberal university as both vulnerable and assertive. Kate’s narrative demonstrates ways in which the emotion work/labour of feminist practice can leave feminists at a disadvantage in a space which does not value caregiving by women, because it is viewed too often as a taken-for-granted fact of ‘femininity’ and so does not take on the same symbolic capital as when done by men; however, as feminist academics we must also be aware of how particular feminist narratives and rhetoric have been co-opted as part of neoliberalism and the way in which feminists may also act in accordance with neoliberal value systems (Phipps 2014).

There is, however, another way in which feminist academics might hold power in the neoliberal university, and this is demonstrated by Johanna. During the ethnography Johanna spoke at length about her sense of place as a working-class woman in academia and the way in

which the stigma, inequality, censure, and unfairness she experienced was exacerbated by the enforcement of epistemological and ontological boundaries in sociology. Johanna's path has been, in some senses, consistently 'non-traditional'. She was—in her own words—a teenage 'wild child' and subsequently achieved 'shit A levels' which severely limited her choices post-18. Having chosen the local polytechnic institute over an apprenticeship with a mechanic, Johanna ended up among a class of largely mature students. Her educational 'epiphany' came when she sold her motorbike and bought a computer. The computer had a spellchecker and could cut, copy, add paste text—which made the spatial aspects of writing much clearer. It was in using this tool that Johanna realised she wasn't a 'poor student' but instead was likely to be dyslexic. This opened up writing to Johanna in a way which hadn't previously been accessible. From this Johanna completed her undergraduate and Master's study and applied for a Ph.D. She returned to her hometown part way through to take up a permanent academic position involving heavy administration and teaching. She called this a 'Faustian pact': the caveat of the job being that she would not complete her Ph.D. research and would instead attain her Ph.D. by portfolio, through her published work. This is significant to Johanna's approach to writing and her ability to understand herself as legitimate in intellectual sociology spaces which she sees as dominated by conventional forms of research and book-length writing.

Telling me that 'disciplines and disciplining', Johanna made repeated reference to sociology as a space hostile to the modes of expression she deemed necessary and appropriate as part of her class-conscious feminist practice. Johanna often narrated her writing practice and engagement with academia in terms of shame and stigma—this included constant checks on aspects such as spelling and grammar, Johanna feeling that slipping on these parts of writing showed her as lacking the cultural or educational capital of her peers. To not use correct grammar or spelling would mark her out as unsophisticated, crude, and not grounded in a high-quality prestigious education. However, in a discussion of her recent promotion to Chair, Johanna raised the question of 'what type of professor I want to be' and confided that this promotion has had a major effect on how she sees herself, saying that 'it has helped with internal self-stigmatisation'. When Johanna was promoted, she was able to choose the

title of her Chair; she debated one which made reference to feminism, gender, or class before finally deciding on ‘Professor of Sociology’. For Johanna, this was a powerful moment in which she was able to ‘assume the centre-ground’. The action of doing so is, as Johanna says, ‘a “fuck you”’. For Johanna, the naming of herself as ‘sociology’ is pertinent—an open and pointed assertion that feminism *is* sociology, rather than something which sits externally or tangentially to the discipline.

Feminist Fragility and the Neoliberal University

The accounts above demonstrate ways in which feminist practice often sits in contradiction to the values of the neoliberal university. It also demonstrates strategies women in academia have taken in order to attempt to guard against censure by the neoliberal university; often this has meant finding ways to claim mainstream space as their own. To end, I want to draw attention to the ambiguity and ambivalence of these feminist positions—that these women’s experiences and strategies show them both as agentive and exposed to the precarity of a patriarchal and exclusionary audit culture. This is neatly shown by adding some texture to Kate’s narrative. Though Kate articulated a very clear inequality between men and women in the academy, and drew attention to how this is underscored in the position of women who are mothers, she was also keenly aware of her privilege and the power of her status as a senior academic. Kate expressed this particularly in relation to her own consciousness regarding the REF. She discussed her relative security within this system, noting that, ‘70% of my REF activities are probably things I’d do anyway’. The journals she wants to publish in—her desired audience—are already the mainstream department-approved journals. Kate recognised her advantage here—that she is able to work within the parameters of the REF without it strongly affecting her writing practice, publication decisions, or sense of self. Crucially, Kate located this advantage in her career stage and institutional location—that she is ‘lucky’ that there is accord between her aims and those of her institution. Further to this, having published in highly rated journals and won several large grants, Kate asserted her abil-

ity to refuse some of the parameters of audit culture: 'I'm in a position to tell them to fuck off, to say "fuck you". Early career people who are precarious are not'. Here, Kate pointedly notes that her institutional privilege—again, drawn on grounds of hegemonic (male, white) power—is what protects much of her own feminist practice. Despite Kate's strong feelings of precarity as a mother, she does possess some safe institutional ground. Kate's ability to draw on elements of hegemonic power whilst concomitantly being disadvantaged within a system geared to a male-oriented value system shows the complexity of feminist positions within the academy—particularly the uneasy cooperation with dominant power that a number of feminist/women participants spoke of undertaking.

The fragility of feminist positions in the academy is emphatically shown in those instances where the neoliberal university openly appropriates and uses those feminist positions for its own purposes. Naomi spoke powerfully about this, citing numerous instances in which she is 'dragged' onto various institutional diversity and administrative panels in order to represent the 'brown woman position'. This highlights how Naomi is already monitored within the system *because* of her position as a woman of colour. It also augments Naomi's earlier argument that her very cautious and thorough preparation for the REF is necessary because women of colour academics are 'always under more scrutiny' and because of this it's necessary to obtain the standard levels of achievement, but also show how you go 'above and beyond' these. Naomi feels the need not just to prove that her work was valuable to the institution but that she herself is of value also—and often this means being compelled to replicate dominant forms of legitimacy in published work whilst simultaneously standing as a marker of 'diversity' for the institution. Naomi's account shows how women of colour are reified and pushed to do significant symbolic work for the neoliberal university. Naomi's attainment of 'elite' status in sociology—as a Professor—is built upon serious physical labour. It is not simply that Naomi thinks a certain style of creative or artistic sociology will be judged harshly by her more policy- or scientific method-oriented peers, it is that she recognises her *visibility* as a woman of colour. The bolstering of her 'real' work with her REF work is done as self-protection. The labour involved is not only physical but emotional as well, and it emerges from the need to shorten the perceived distance between herself and the centre ground of sociology through sheer hard graft.

This chapter has highlighted the way in which taking a feminist position in the neoliberal academy often results in paradoxical mobilisations of power and privilege. Each of the participants I have discussed continues to hold a secure, senior position within sociology, and all have shown an ability to embed themselves within academia, produce the work they deem worthwhile, and engage with academia from a feminist perspective. Johanna makes serious claims to the value of feminist practice and gender-oriented scholarship to sociology through her choice of title. Kate underscores the value of communitarian, collective feminist practice through continuing her commitment to this despite feeling its inconsistency with the neoliberalisation of sociology. However, all three examples shown in this chapter also demonstrate that part of securing oneself in academia whilst holding a feminist position ultimately often comes by through increased workload. Ros Gill comments that ‘A punishing intensification of work has become an endemic feature of academic life’ (Gill 2009: 231), and I think this is even more so for women, and for women who attempt to live academia through feminist research methods, thought, and practice. Naomi’s strategy of writing double the amount of work necessary, so that she can fulfil both her political goals and professional requirements, is both laborious and emotionally draining. This is succinctly demonstrated through another example, which focuses on the role of epistemology and the canon. Sharon M. Meagher recounts a situation in which feminist philosopher Barbara Freeman was asked by a man, after a conference presentation, ‘what about Hegel?’—a question which showed little engagement with the work Freeman had actually presented:

Freeman got up from her chair, walked around the table to the very edge of the stage and leaning hard toward the questioner, screamed “WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH HEGEL? WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH HEGEL? FUCKING NOTHING!” Freeman then calmly returned to her seat, took the microphone, and answered the man’s question in tremendous detail, proving that she could pass his test while at the same time exposing the absurdity of having to engage in such a translation project. (Meagher 2012: 206)

The above quotation is used by Meagher to evidence her assertion that Freeman has succinctly and successfully challenged the modes of dominant

knowledge production in philosophy whereby feminist philosophers are unfairly and unequally compelled not only to have expertise in feminist philosophy but also a full command of the mainstream canon. Meagher writes of the ‘extraordinary and unfair expectations that were being placed on us’ and the ‘utter lack of reciprocity’ from mainstream, usually white male philosophers, who feel no responsibility to have any knowledge of feminist theories (Meagher 2012: 205–206). Freeman’s fierce, calculated, and scholarly response to the ‘Hegel boy’ in the audience is praised by Meagher, but is it such a victory? Meagher’s description of the event indicates that Freeman’s response—whilst certainly effective—is also built on returns to the dominant symbolic of knowledge production and fraught with emotional and intellectual labour and, furthermore, demonstrates that in order to make these claims to legitimacy, many of us simply end up working harder. Feminist fragility in the neoliberal academy stems from the way that the value system of the neoliberal academy and the audit cultures it allows to thrive is driven by a patriarchal conception of legitimate knowledge production.

The Price We Pay

The above discussion of feminist positions in the neoliberal academy demonstrates opportunities for assertiveness within the vulnerability of difficult and potentially hostile institutional conditions. I want, especially, to end this chapter on a note of hope and to pull together how the strategic machinations of participants here provide firm ground on which we might claim validity for feminist positions within an increasingly destructive and narrow conception of ‘knowledge’ in academia. Ros Gill perceptively notes that

The “kitchen” of academia is, it would seem, too hot for almost everyone, but this has not resulted in collective action to turn down the heat, but instead to an overheated competitive atmosphere in which acts of kindness, generosity and solidarity often seem to continue only in spite of, rather than because of, the governance of universities. (Gill 2009: 232)

My question, related to this, is twofold: firstly, whether the inclusion of feminist academics in the governance of universities (for instance even in the ways Naomi is used) might result in the egalitarian, communitarian, and

supportive politics of feminist practice becoming part of institutional governance; secondly, whether it matters—and is perhaps preferable—that feminist positions sit outside of institutional power? Is there a way of countering the neoliberal university through the continued creation of institutional spaces oriented to feminist practice (e.g. such as this collection)? Michael Billig asserts that audit culture is ‘a culture of boasting’ (2013: 24). Might we not take this on ourselves and ‘boast’ of the significant contributions feminism has already made to the academy—to openly and assertively own these in teaching, research, and writing. Arguably, under these conditions of inspection and audit, it is important to follow Johanna’s example and claim feminist positions as always already present within the academy.

Acknowledgment This work was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council grant number B106424E. I would like to thank all participants who generously gave their time to the research.

Note

1. The Research Excellence Framework assesses research done in UK higher education institutions. It is framed around a benchmark of ‘excellence’ and ranks written outputs of researchers from ‘unclassified’ to four star. The exercise is conducted across ‘units of assessment’ which broadly map on to disciplines. These are judged by a panel of senior academics in the discipline who read and score the submissions. Full-time academics are required to submit four ‘outputs’ to the Research Excellence Framework exercise. In preparation for this, many departments run a ‘mini-REF’ in which colleagues grade one another’s outputs.

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Feelings of Change: Alternative Feminist Professional Trajectories

C. Laura Lovin

By 2008 concepts of precariousness, insecurity, temporary, or episodic labor in the new political economy started describing the work and life situations of young academics in the United States (Armano and Murgia 2013; Brophy and de Peuter 2007; Gherardi and Murgia 2012; Ylijoki 2010). At the same time, the terms “all administrative,” “commercialization,” “corporatization,” “academic capitalism,” and “neoliberalization” were signaling further changes in higher education institutions in the United States (Bok 2003; Chomsky 2014; Gill 2010; Ginsberg 2011; Mills 2012; Soley 1995). This chapter addresses the trajectories of Women’s and Gender Studies (WGS) PhDs who left academia in search of professional lives that combine feminist scholarship with activism, service, and policy making. More specifically, it was inspired by a series of interviews with feminist professionals realized by Dr. Nafisa Tanjeem for

This has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska Curie Grant Agreement No. 658870.

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Y. Taylor, K. Lahad (eds.), *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University*, Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64224-6_7

a graduate course titled “Feminist Futures: Diverse Intellectual Careers and Entrepreneurial Leadership.”¹ The four interviews that I selected from the entire series are placed in dialogue with critiques of the flexibilization and precarization of academic knowledge workers. Whereas a significant part of this literature sheds light on collective strategies of resistance, this chapter focuses on the narratives of WGS PhDs whose critical explorations of academic employment and creative inquiries into career options outside academe could effect change in WGS advanced graduate training and enable graduates to keep up with their feminist commitments while bypassing precarity in academic life (Hawkesworth and Williams Castro 2016).

The Precarization of Academic Knowledge Workers: Terms and Contexts

The logic and operations of capitalist precarization did not form anew with the advent of the service and knowledge economy. Job insecurity and capital’s preference for cheap and vulnerable labor are practices as old as private enterprise. They had been fought against through workers’ mobilizations to improve social security practices and reforms of the welfare state. Since industrialization, the precarization of workers and its counterpart, social security, unfolded through gendered, heteronormative, racializing, and minoritizing processes (Beechey 2016; Lorey 2015; Vallas 2012; Winter 2008). Their subjectivity-making effects continue to be recognizable in everyday and media discourses. Particularly persistent among them are gendering waged work as masculine, with its attendant devaluing of women’s paid and unpaid work, gendering teaching and education as feminine through associations that tie women to caring and nurturing social roles, gendering and racializing the recipients of social security, and linking the figure of the migrant with low-paid jobs by way of rendering migrants as the cause of wage depreciation. From a social perspective, the populations who inhabit such subject positions are relegated to a precarious existence and, as pointed out by Isabell Lorey, precarity is ultimately “a category of order that denotes social positioning of insecurity and

hierarchization, which accompanies processes of Othering” (Lorey in Puar 2012, 165).

In the case of the middle classes, the precarization of labor has been also achieved through ideological pressures that have romanticized flexibility, creativity, and affective attachments to work. Whereas flexibility allowed middle-class women to juggle family care responsibility with earning a wage, the flexibility of labor hides the fact that it distributes the maximization of profits on the side of employers while pushing greater insecurity on the side of the workers (Chomsky 2014). Creativity has insidiously colonized the subjectivities of significant segments of contemporary professional workers. It came to simultaneously designate a trait of personality and a sector of economic activity that uses labor, in its creative, affective, and intellectual forms, for short-term, insecure, and low-wage jobs, often described using the term projects (Lorey 2015). Being engaged in activities that are at once enjoyable and stimulating constitutes an end in itself for many graduate students and fresh PhDs who work as adjuncts, and it justifies living precariously at least for a period of time.

The hiring practices that swap tenure-track faculty positions with temporary positions belong to the corporate business model that aims to reduce labor costs. In Judith Butler’s view, the circumstances of “nontenured academic workers link the institutional crisis of knowledge within the university and the production of disposable populations of workers” (Butler in Puar 2012, 167). As in the case of the other disposable population of workers, these shifts have psychological, social, organizational, and political consequences. The academic knowledge workers’ docility, insecurity, and obedience are feelings sought after by the architects of neoliberal higher education. By transferring instruction to adjuncts and graduate students, the corporate university achieves two concurrent goals: the creation of precarious worker contingents who are more susceptible to control and the reorientation of funds toward noninstructional purposes such as administration, marketing, and public relations (Chomsky 2014; Ginsberg 2011; Lorey in Puar 2012). Furthermore the ongoing academic provisionality of graduate students and adjunct faculty excludes them from the decision-making space. Nevertheless, nontenured academic workers did not leave these changes unchallenged. The contestations

of the corporate takeover of the university vary in scale, but they have emerged across the United States. Effective activism was demonstrated by the California Part-Time Faculty Association, which organized 30,000 part-time faculty. Its units began to win collective bargaining for its members in the early 2000s (Brodsky 2002). The organizing actions of the part-time faculty at University of Missouri-Kansas City raised the issues of compensation and pay disparity between full-time and part-time faculty not only with the administration of the university but also with students, parents, and the general public (Fiala and Kline 2002). Raising visibility around issues of pay and compensation unmasks the links between interrelated precarities (Butler in Puar 2012) and exposes the false corporate claims that hide the exploitative mechanisms affecting students, faculty, and staff, such as justifying raising tuition by claiming it was being used to increase the wages of faculty and staff, when in fact the latter's wages have remained stagnant or even declined in recent years. Academic labor mobilizations can thus draw attention to, challenge, and reenvision the conditions that undergird linked systems of precarity through their fight for a living wage, student loan debt relief, and making college education affordable (Adsit et al. 2015, 26).

A Note on Methods

The four original in-depth interviews that I selected for this chapter belong to a series of 14 interviews with feminist professionals conducted by Dr. Nafisa Tanjeem for the Spring 2016 graduate course developed and taught by Professor Mary Hawkesworth and Dr. Fatima Williams Castro in the Women's and Gender Studies Department at Rutgers University.² Their course aimed to explore ways to address the growing insecurity of academic labor markets through intellectual inquiry combined with professional capacity building for fields like academic administration, applied research and policy making, unions, development or poverty alleviation, entrepreneurship, the media, nonprofit organizations, and foundations. Dr. Tanjeem's interviews span these professional sectors introducing viewers to self-identified feminists who hold advanced graduate degrees in various academic disciplines and leadership

positions in their organizations. For the purpose of this chapter, I opted to include only the interviews with recipients of PhDs in the interdisciplinary field of women's, gender, and sexuality studies from US institutions.³ From the eight PhDs in WGS, I narrowed my selection to four early career feminist professionals, whose narratives worked with feelings of displacement, alienation, insecurity, and competitiveness in order to arrive at trust, collegiality, and solidarity.

Methodologically, employment interviews with persons educated at the graduate level present us with the unique opportunity to add nuance to or even dismantle the hegemony of narratives of success and upward mobility usually associated with this category of professional workers. The original interviews have an average duration of 80 minutes, which allows for the articulation of complex analyses that weave together personal work histories, accounts of professional agency, and affective registers. The interviews were made available to class participants via a private site on YouTube. The series of interviews conducted by Dr. Tanjeem is relevant in an analytical perspective as well as for more pragmatic professionalizing ends. In this chapter I secured permission to use the names of the feminist professionals who were interviewed within the framework of the "Feminist Futures: Diverse Intellectual Careers and Entrepreneurial Leadership" course. They also gave permission to publish the YouTube links to the original interviews, which enables the readers of this volume to access the unabridged versions of their interventions.

The next section of this chapter is devoted to the presentation of the abridged versions of the four selected interviews—a selection that was motivated by the intention to foreground the entanglement of feelings, academic structures, and intellectual and political passions. A turn to what it means to feel in neoliberal academia guides the understanding of how we are moved, what attracts us to feminist academic work, what are the joys and pains of feminist work inside and outside higher education, what are the powers of institutions that seize us, and what feelings and emotions lead to changes in our present and future. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of four themes that recurred in the interviews: the timing of the decision to look for a feminist professional future outside academia; the search for a work ethos that bypasses competitiveness, surpassing the

isolation of academic knowledge work; dealing with feelings of failure; and finally, reimagining graduate training in women's and gender studies.

Individual Alternatives to Academic Precarity

1. *Academic Administrative Trajectories: Working Toward Student Diversity and Inclusion*

Dr. Danica Tisdale-Fisher received a PhD in Women's Studies (WS) from Emory University. She is Assistant Director and Dean of Admissions for the academic summer enrichment program of Phillips Academy—a coeducational preparatory school for boarding and day students in grades 9 to 12 from all over the world.

Dr. Tisdale-Fisher recounted the juncture of her reorientation toward professions outside academia:

When I first entered graduate school I thought I would do what everyone else was there to do: pursue a tenure track position, read, research and write books. I think pretty early on in my career I decided that the tenure track was not what I was interested in pursuing. I spent quite a while deciding what it was I wanted to do because I did not have models at Emory at the time. [...] As I made my way through graduate school I became more clear that I had a particular skill set that was really suited for administrative work and I began to prepare myself to think about what I can do with a PhD beyond the graduate school.

Dr. Tisdale-Fisher's graduate internship with the esteemed United Negro College Fund and a continued education course in grant writing enabled her to imagine career possibilities outside higher education. In the meantime, life followed its course; she got married and moved to California where she started a job with the Children's Defense Office. She consolidated and further diversified her work experiences in administration. She discovered that she was good at and enjoyed fundraising, development work, and project management. Upon graduation, Dr. Tisdale-Fisher decided to return to education and looked for work opportunities that involved interaction with students. Her first job after entailed working with students who were seeking internship opportunities in the northeastern United States,

and she then settled at Phillips Academy, where her husband also received a teaching position. Her account also sheds light on the linkages between the precarization of education, social services, and nonprofit sectors:

I was in school during the time when the economy really shifted and a lot of funding that was available before for graduate students dried up. There were less lines opening for people coming out of graduate school.[...] A lot of my classmates got stuck in a conundrum, wanting to go in the profession, wanting to become professors but not seeing the opportunities. [...] Nonprofits were really suffering financially. People didn't have money to donate to nonprofits, which affected fundraising and led to working in understaffed and underresourced offices. [...] A lot of people who work in nonprofits, particularly women, would tell you that it is very taxing; they are not compensated for a lot of the work that they are doing and don't have the resources to do as much as they would like to do. This affected my decision to not continue on and to return to education. I saw the same situation in higher education when I came back.

For Dr. Tisdale-Fisher, the prospect of returning to higher education had to be also considered within the context of her family situation. The decision to forego the tenure-track path opened up employment opportunities for herself and her husband:

My husband has a PhD from Berkeley. We are both very ambitious people and we were looking for opportunities in places where we both could thrive. [...] As most academic couples understand, there is always a give and take there. When you throw children into the mix that complicates matters even more. [...] One of the things that has been great about me moving beyond the idea of tenure track is that it opened up so many possibilities for me: my skill set is broader. If my husband decides to return to higher education, I can plug myself in other opportunities in ways which wouldn't have been possible if both of us were looking for a tenure-track position.

Dr. Tisdale-Fisher emphasized the stress of entering the job market as an academic couple and shared her appreciation for the family-friendly environment of Phillips Academy.

At Phillips Academy, she is dedicated to finding students who would not have the opportunity to set foot in a school of such caliber and to

make sure that they succeed and thrive. The school's commitment to students, faculty, and staff diversity coincides with Dr. Tisdale-Fisher's lifelong intellectual and political commitment to dispelling race and gender myths and stereotypes. She explained:

Being a black woman in any sort of work environment always brings challenges. [...] I have lived all over the country, these challenges are different in different places. I had had experiences where my capabilities had been questioned. I think this has a lot to do with race and gender. A lot of work that I continue to do is to dispel stereotypes and myths by educating colleagues and peers, as well as students. I see this as life long work for me to do. I feel I am in a position where I can do it, I have the language to do it and it's a responsibility that I think I have.

Reflecting on her professional trajectory and the junctures that set its course, Dr. Tisdale-Fisher concluded that graduate programs should consider more proactively professional options outside of higher education:

Unfortunately when I was in school we didn't have these conversations and I wish that we had. I think it's the responsibility of graduate programs across the country to provide training and mentorship; to do workshops; to help students think through the kinds of options that are available to them; to help them to identify skills that are marketable beyond the tenure track. [...] I would like to see more career fairs. I would like them to bring organizations on campus to talk about the things they are looking for in PhD graduates. I'd love for those conversations to happen earlier on so graduate students have a chance to prepare themselves for other kinds of opportunities. I also think there should be some education on the part of the graduate faculty [...] so that they are able to identify the skill sets that are a strength for their students and could be marketable beyond the tenure track.

Dr. Tisdale-Fisher's trajectory demonstrates the complex interplays among career aspirations, intellectual work, institutional opportunities, family circumstances, and larger socioeconomic contexts in making professional decisions. Her relatively early orientation toward a professional future outside the tenure allowed her the time to explore alternative paths and build a broad repertoire of skills. Upon graduation she was able to capitalize on her work experience and expertise by securing a position,

which matched her political commitments, intellectual interests, collaborative ethos, and family situation.

2. Applied Research: Reforming Criminal Justice Through Qualitative Participatory Research

Dr. Ryan Shanahan received a PhD in Women's Studies (WS) from the University of Maryland, College Park. She is the Research Director of the Center for Youth Justice at Vera Institute of Justice (VIJ)—an independent nonprofit national research and policy organization which addresses adult and youth incarceration, immigration, and victimization.

Dr. Shanahan's career plan had always been to combine social justice work with applied research. Her intellectual, political, and professional commitments were shaped by her own experience with homelessness and her family's brushes with the criminal justice system: "My whole family has been touched by the criminal justice system. They weren't victims of the criminal justice system, which makes me think about the white privilege in my own family. [...] This made me think hard about the ways we choose to handle people who need help or committed a mistake, and set me on a career trajectory to do social justice reform. This is my passion. This is what I wanted to do since 1999."

To Dr. Shanahan the years of PhD training provided a space to be theoretically reflective and critical about the practices of the criminal justice system. She continued her hands-on involvement with social justice advocacy by volunteering in the community, which gave her the unique opportunity to test the theories encountered in graduate training and build a mutually constitutive relation between theory and practice: "Whatever you are studying, the people you are studying are the closest to the solution. Working with a harm reduction organization servicing adults who were trading sex changed my entire approach to the way that I did my work. If I hadn't been on the streets and meeting people who were most impacted by the policies that PhD and Masters programs were creating I wouldn't have had that lens."

Midway through her PhD, Dr. Shanahan moved back to New York City and started working with VIJ. Working full time was critical for shaping her dissertation, both in terms of getting access to data and in terms of her

writing voice, yet her department did not validate the work she did in the field with research credits. Upon graduation, the PhD degree gave credibility to her ideas and propelled her to a leadership position. Her specialization in WS equipped her with critical thinking skills of indisputable value for her field:

I have a racial justice lens that is really important and really critical for the work I'm doing. While other organizations take the system for what it is and want to reform small parts of it, I want an overall reform and the WGS program really prepared me for that: not being limited by the reality that we have, but being able to envision a different reality and a different approach. I think it is the critical race theory and critical feminist theory that set me apart from those who come here with the criminal justice, with a very positivistic background.

As director of research, she is involved in leading projects, doing research, developing data collection and data visualization strategies, and training and preparing staff for the challenges of prison research. Importantly, this position gives her the opportunity to make her mark as a qualitative researcher committed to collaborative research. When asked what she enjoys most about her job, Dr. Shanahan explained: "What I love about my job is being able to work with young people who are incarcerated and being able to help them identify the small grain of power that they have to provide recommendations; then committing to them that I'll work as hard as I can to see that the recommendations that they give happen. [...] I really like the time that I spend with young people in groups and brainstorming about their problems and figuring out how to fix them." Dr. Shanahan also enjoys the organizational culture that the VIJ has developed: "There's always time for socializing. Being part of a team brings up this social aspect and as Research Director I am in charge with creating this culture for my staff to be part of and be happy with."

Also in relation to her PhD training, she discussed areas that require change such as the gaps in social research methods and methodologies, the acute affective vulnerabilities experienced by graduate students, and the financial risks of student loans. With regard to social research methods and methodologies, the practices employed by VIJ could in fact be transferred to PhD programs: "I'm getting that in the job, learning from

interns, watching proposals being developed, thinking about different types of methods that you might use to answer your research question. We have a research speakers series that brings outside researchers every month to speak about their work and that is really helpful.”

Dr. Shanahan discussed the relation between student debt and graduate education. In her case, enrolling for a Master of Social Work was unfeasible, considering the cost of the degree (80–100 thousand USD), the high cost of living in NYC, and the relatively low salaries social workers make after graduation. In a way this is one of the reasons that led her to pursue a PhD. Loan forgiveness programs for people who work in social justice changed those prohibitive conditions, but the reality of debt acquired through education is still part of the lives of many graduates. Dr. Shanahan also talked about the unreadiness of her program to train PhD students from working-class backgrounds who were not prepared for graduate school at a small liberal arts college. One solution to the devastating effects that being pushed out of graduate school had had on some of her colleagues could be prevented through building supportive educational environments: “Any graduate program wants the hip activist working-class person but they are not ready for them. Graduate school exacerbates mental health problems for students and it happens every year. [...] We should create an atmosphere that is supportive and rigorous. I would offer a training on strengths-based feedback to anyone who would take it. This is not just WS. I’ve seen people from other departments and I think the academia can do a better job there.” Dr. Shanahan believes that ultimately, graduate students are assets to their programs and by organizing themselves they could ultimately demand the training, research experience, and support they want to see in the program. Isolation and vulnerability are emotional responses that ultimately congeal under the intersectional impact of institutional cultures, societal values, and economic structures that are invested in the reproduction of class privilege. Dr. Shanahan’s account traces a blueprint that could inspire young scholars who seek routes other than the tenure track that reconnect their feminist intellectual pursuits to networks of dialogue, work, and accountability beyond what is required by the narrow definitions of academic success.

3. *Student Affairs Through a Queer and Feminist Lens: Continuing the Pursuit of Social Justice*

Dr. Abigail Parsons received a PhD in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) from Emory University. She is now the Director of the Campus LGBTQIA Resource Center at Virginia Tech. Dr. Parsons went to graduate school envisioning a career in higher education. Relatively early in her graduate training, she decided to change her professional goals—a decision which was motivated by a host of factors:

I definitely went in with the intention of pursuing a tenure-track career. I was very passionate about teaching and research. I was very passionate in particular about using teaching and research to pursue social justice goals as they relate to feminism and queerness specifically. [...] Midway through my second year I realized that I didn't want to continue on the tenure-track job and I wanted to do something a little bit different. I realized that even though I loved research and I loved teaching, I wasn't convinced about the opportunities of the job market. The job market at the time, like the job market now, was not particularly favorable. I also thought that teaching and research were not having an immediate enough impact for me, as a form activism. I knew I wanted to do something that was situated more directly in the community, and also more interpersonal, interacting with people.

Dr. Parsons' immigration status as an international student from the UK limited significantly the range of employment possibilities, ultimately excluding the nonprofit world from her consideration due to the sector's lack of capacity to sponsor work visas.

The academic culture of competitiveness constituted another factor that motivated Dr. Parsons to search for other employment opportunities: "I like seeing my peers as collaborators. Graduate school forced you to see your peers as competitors." While Dr. Parsons does not deny the possibility of collaborative, nonhierarchical academic relations, she felt that such organizational cultures are more achievable in student affairs. Despite the fact that student affairs positions also did not guarantee H-1B⁴ visa sponsorships, she decided to undertake this risk and pursue a professional future in this field. To prepare herself, she joined the LGBT Lives Center as a volunteer and learned that she loved the immediacy and tangibility of

the outcomes of her work. In time she joined the Advisory Board of the center and its strategic planning team, and eventually a graduate assistantship was created specifically for her. Upon graduation, she had job offers revoked on several occasions due to institutional incapacity to sponsor work visas. Fortunately, the timely overturn of the Defense of Marriage Act by the Supreme Court in June 2013 allowed her to marry her long-term partner and thus became a green card holder.

Dr. Parsons explained that whereas her nationality was a barrier, her gender and sexuality worked to her advantage. As a queer-identified person, open about her sexuality, she is sought after by students and faculty who felt safe to discuss their own situations with her. Her PhD, her work experience, and the prestigious mentorship acquired at Emory ultimately propelled her to a director-level position at Georgia Tech. As director of the LGBTQIA Center, Dr. Parsons is in charge of the center's strategic planning for programs, financial operations, personnel, marketing and communications, event planning, consulting and training on LGBTQIA issues with other departments and organizations, alumni development and fundraising, policy development on LGBTQIA issues (such as creating a transgender participation policy for intramural, housing, or policies for gender expression), and last but not least providing individual student support. When asked what she enjoys the most about her work, Dr. Parsons responded:

I get to do things everyday that make people's lives a little easier, whether that is to find them a place in housing, or connecting them to other transgender student so that they don't feel as alone, or helping update professors curricula to make it more queer inclusive. [...] I really like working on policy. I like researching and benchmarking. [...] I love my one-on-one interactions with my students, when students come in with a concern and they leave the meeting saying I feel much better now. Those times when I feel I can make a difference to students from Georgia Tech, that's one of my highlights. I love when I get to collaborate with coworkers, and I work with the best coworkers ever. They have such great energy, they're really into teamwork supporting each other and making sure people are not getting burned out. I love anything that I do when I get to work with them.

In considering the benefits of her degree to her current position, Dr. Parsons explained that her PhD in WGSS had been looked upon favorably

by women's and LGBT centers. She also felt that a PhD degree left its mark on the dynamics of hierarchical work relations as it granted her more credibility in her interactions with faculty and administrators. Whereas she wholeheartedly acknowledged feminist, queer, and intersectionality theories undergird her understanding of social justice issues, her politics, as well as everyday aspects of her work, Dr. Parsons deemed that her preparation for the non-tenure-track professional alternatives was inadequate: "My department was not equipped to prepare students for non academic roles. The faculty were supportive of me pursuing a students affairs career but were not sure how to help. [...] When I started I didn't think there was a lot of knowledge and support of non academic carriers. [...] People need to know that choosing another path is not inferior. You should not feel that you failed your department if you decide to work in a nonprofit."

To the graduate students who want to pursue professions outside higher education, she strongly recommended pursuing community work, volunteering opportunities, or graduate assistantships with campus centers in order to diversify their work experiences, which will later enable them to reshape their CV into compelling resumes. Then it is the responsibility of graduate school and career services to provide workshops and guidance on how to go about this change. Dr. Parsons emphasized that writing a dissertation does not equate with project management experience, despite the fact that many times advisors propose this equivalency. Whereas competency in research and good writing skills are sought after, good program management requires experience in the development, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-informed and assessment-driven programs with learning outcomes. For this reason, practical experience with organizing a conference, planning events, and designing curricula with centers on campus or even within the WS departments moves into the foreground when PhDs are on the job market for student affairs positions.

4. Social Justice Unions and Higher Education Partnerships: Fighting Against Neoliberal Restructuring

Dr. Kelly Coogan-Gehr received a PhD in Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) from Rutgers University. At the time of the interview, she

was the Education Director of National Nurses United (NNU)—the United States' largest union of bedside registered nurses. Coogan-Gehr envisioned an academic career throughout her graduate training: "I absolutely wanted to be a professor. I wanted to be a director of a WGS program. In my self-conceptualization around where I wanted my career to go I was definitely thinking internal to the academy. [...] When I went for a PhD in WGS I thought there are hundreds of WGS programs nationally, and certainly many professors will be retiring. I thought it will be self-evident that this new generation of very politicized and erudite young scholars will take over the WS programs."

Dr. Coogan-Gehr entered the academic job market in the fall of 2008, in the midst of the economic crash. From the 70 or 80 tenure-track positions in WGS advertised in the early fall of 2008, a majority were renegotiated and changed into non-tenure-track visiting positions or canceled altogether by the end of the hiring cycle. Under these dire economic circumstances, Dr. Coogan-Gehr felt grateful to have been offered a visiting professor position with Eastern Washington University. At 15 classes a year, on a quarter-based schedule, her teaching load was taxing, particularly when placed alongside service, mentoring, research, publications, and being on the job market. She published her first monograph, and one article appeared in the top tier journal of the field, but the excessive workload started taking its toll. At this juncture Dr. Coogan-Gehr started considering options outside academia:

I was very burned out and I decided I needed to make a change. My course load was too high and I thought it wasn't going to allow for longer-term professional development. I actually started thinking aggressively about options outside of academia and the NNU posted positions on academic list serves for researchers and educators. I applied for a position of educator and this is how I came here. I honestly think that if you really want to be in academia, you can. It is a matter of being patient. I didn't know this at the time. I just felt dehumanized and frustrated, as I think many people do when they go on the job market. You feel like you are putting your best foot forward but things are not working out. [...] It is not the kind of linear trajectory that we envisioned for ourselves when we first went into higher education.

Dr. Coogan-Gehr joined NNU as an educator and was soon promoted to director of education. In this position she coordinated all the

classes included in the educational tours across the country and supervised four PhDs who contributed their research expertise to the program; she also developed and coordinated the certificate in Women's Global Health Leadership at Rutgers and thought about further possibilities for higher education expansion. She was also in charge of the internal staff education programs of approximately 300 to 400 individuals and worked with the organizing team for the biannual educational conferences attended by thousands of nurses nationally.

When asked to reflect on the most enjoyable aspects of her work with NNU, Dr. Coogan-Gehr first talked about the resources that the organization was able to direct toward the actualization of good ideas. Such was her idea to expand into higher education. Her vision aimed to address the incursions made by the neoliberal and neoconservative movements into higher education with its ideological effect of naturalizing privatization. Institutionalizing social justice in higher education is part of a larger movement-building process, preparing students to think critically about the current economic system, the sociopolitical circumstances of the current moment, and the connections of race, ethnicity, and nationality to issues of class disparity. Secondly, Dr. Coogan-Gehr brought up the joy of having left behind the isolation of academia to join a group of women healthcare professionals who were at once resourceful, talented, and dedicated to the collective good: "They come from different countries, have different life experiences, have fought in revolutions [...] who have such rich life paths that match what many of us in Women's Studies think about. [...] The staff at this union is really incredible and I feel privileged to have joined this group of women who have accomplished so many things, and whose accomplishments wouldn't have been legible in an academic setting." Ultimately the job with NNU and the encounter with the nurses' energy, social justice knowledge, and political mobility allowed her to reconnect with the motivations that oriented her toward WS in the first place and to conceptualize tangible ways of movement building.

Whereas her PhD training gave her a highly suitable preparation for working at NNU, Dr. Coogan-Gehr noted that managerial, administrative, and leadership skills were competences that she had developed on the job:

A PhD in WGS prepares you perfectly intellectually for a position like this. What I had to learn as I went along was the administrative managerial stuff and leadership qualities. [...] The biggest skill is deep accountability, to the

people who work under me. In the process of becoming an academic you become very isolated, you are primarily accountable for branding yourself and making sure that your work is rigorous and perhaps the most creative work in your field. Here my accountability is actualizing the best for the collective good, and identifying collective talents in ways that are consonant with what the organization needs.

Dr. Coogan-Gehr's recommendations for WGS graduate students and departments are consistent with the suggestions formulated by Dr. Tisdale-Fisher, Dr. Shanahan, and Dr. Parsons. She emphasized the need for rethinking graduate training and PhD support in ways that guard graduates from the negative feelings that seem to have accompanied graduates' transition to professions outside academia. Dr. Coogan-Gehr explained how these feelings played out in her situation:

[I had to deal with] internalized shame that I did not succeed in academia in the ways that I thought I would based on what I had done. From earlier on, I think I would have really revalued thinking about alternatives outside of higher education. I would have created a better internal narrative around [...] securing a tenure track or a position inside higher education as the only modality of success that I can entertain.[...] I didn't think like that, which created a lot of pain and suffering, and a sense of having failed. Now, of course, I don't feel that I failed at all.

Certainly, negative feelings are no help when attempting to be creative about alternative possibilities for your professional future. Ultimately, revaluing such alternative options and getting prepared for them could entail complex enterprises that bridge the level of the very personal with larger-scale dynamics, such as the workings of institutions of higher education, nonprofits, social movements, policy making organizations, and the politics of the globalizing economy.

Shared Feelings, Directions of Change

The summarized and abridged versions of the four interviews presented in the previous section opened ways of understanding how the reorganization of higher education has impacted feminist early career PhDs.

Whereas the four accounts allowed me to grapple with the alienating and displacing impact of neoliberal restructuring, in reading them I was struck by the creative ways in which the four feminist PhDs carved individual professional trajectories outside the tenure-track script, most importantly maintaining their commitment to feminist praxis and politics. In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss five main reoccurring themes in these four accounts that I feel could be mobilized toward creating a blueprint for the reorganization of WGS PhD training in ways that meet the current conditions of the job market.

The Moment of Flight

With the exception of Dr. Shanahan, who entered graduate school with a commitment to social justice research and expectations for a professional future that did not tie her to the tenure-track trajectory, the other three feminist professionals shared a desire to embark on an academic career at the beginning of their graduate training. Dr. Parsons and Dr. Tisdale-Fisher started thinking about not pursuing higher education at an earlier stage in their graduate training, which afforded time to seek professionalizing opportunities to gain skills, knowledge, and work experiences that were required by administrative or student affairs positions. Dr. Coogan-Gehr reached this point after graduation and several years spent in higher education. For these feminist professionals, the decision to step outside academe was fueled at least partially by the feelings formed in response to the neoliberalization of higher education. New feelings of satisfaction and enjoyment that emerged at encounters with different work contexts repositioned them in relation to their old scripts and narratives of postgraduate tenure-track professional future. In the meantime, they also refigured the ways of being in relationship with others while at work by leaving behind an institution that cultivates isolation and constant competitiveness.

1. *Alternatives to Competitiveness*

The attraction to feminist intellectual questions, theory, research, and pedagogies never wavered among the four feminist professionals whose

accounts I included in this chapter. However, particular modes of sociality in the academic environment raised barriers in their way of becoming or being academics. Dr. Tisdale-Fisher talked about diminishing resources available to graduate students and the fewer hiring opportunities available to graduates. Dr. Parsons talked about her unease with the competition for research funding fostered among graduate students and faculty and identifies this feeling as one of the forces that reoriented her to look for a professional future in student affairs. Related to their points, the other two professionals brought up the isolating nature of academic work as well as the damaging effects that feelings of failure could have on the mental health of graduate students. In their current positions, they are all appreciative of the collaborative and trust-based interactions of their work environments, and from their positions of leadership they strive to create organizational cultures that are relational, mutually supportive, reciprocal, based on actualizing trust, and empowering.

2. *Surpassing Isolation*

The feeling of isolation is most explicitly tackled by Dr. Coogan-Gehr in her comparative analysis of accountability inside and outside academia. By counterposing the academic form of accountability (to self-brand) to larger, outward-oriented, and collective modalities of accountability, she resituates the isolated subject into relational spaces of service, research, politics, and policy. This idea is echoed strongly in the observations of the other three feminist professionals. Dr. Tisdale-Fisher details such accountability relations vis-a-vis students and colleagues; Dr. Parsons describes networks of accountability through service and collaborations on policy that link her center to students, parents, various actors within the university as well as beyond. Similarly, Dr. Shanahan is part of a structure that positions her in ongoing direct relations not only with the members of the research on policy making teams that she is leading, the interning students and visiting and lecturing researchers and scholars, but most importantly, her relations of accountability link her to incarcerated people. Ultimately, having left behind the isolation of academia, they all reentered spaces of relationality that allow them to be connected to and work alongside larger groups of individuals who share interests, passions, and intellectual and political commitments.

3. Feelings of Failure and the Hierarchy of Feminist Professional Possibilities

The feeling of failure that the majority of PhDs experience is linked with the positioning of tenure-track jobs at the top of the post graduation professional possibilities, with its implicit gearing of PhD training and resources toward undertaking the tenure-track path in spite of the restructuring undergone by higher education and the significant cut back in tenure-track positions. Dr. Shanahan, whose professional plan entailed from the very beginning combining social justice work with applied research, volunteered or worked in the community throughout her graduate studies. Whereas these experiences were essential to research, her department was resistant to recognizing such work and granting credits for it. Dr. Parsons recounted her surprise at how few of the faculty identified with activism at the beginning of her graduate studies and is firm in her evaluation of her program as unprepared to support it. Dr. Tisdale-Fisher's moments of self-discovery and the work experiences she pursued in order to broaden her skill set were once again sought out by herself outside her department. Ultimately, Dr. Coogan-Gehr talks about the buildup of negative emotions and the internal struggles she went through in her transition from academe to working with NNU. Converging with the previous discussions of feelings of resistance to competitiveness and feelings of isolation, the feelings emerging from negotiating the difficulties of a depressed job market and the need to transition out of academia are at least partially rooted in the hegemony of individualism. The construction of the academic subject on individualist grounds leaves PhDs to negotiate the vagaries of the economy on their own within a field of normalized relations of competition among agents in search for individual solutions.

4. Reconsidering Old Scripts and Changing Practice

Thinking back on their own experiences in graduate school, on job markets, and on professional positions allowed the four feminist professionals to formulate suggestions for change in departments that offer PhD training in WGS. The four feminist professionals are highly appreciative of the training they received, particularly with a view to feminist

theory, critical race theory, intersectional analysis, social justice studies, and LGBT and queer theory. The expertise they built in these fields constituted clear advantages on the job market external to academia. However, their advice for change ranges from resignifying success for graduate students through the pluralization of post graduation professional possibilities to offering more support to students who chose such alternative paths and from adaptations in the course curriculum to include a more rigorous preparation for applied research to professionalization activities that would introduce students to such alternatives. In terms of the support that graduate students should receive, Dr. Shanahan emphasized the need for a closer consideration of the training needs and expectations of PhD students from working-class backgrounds. It is ultimately a matter of diversity, a matter championed by WGS departments and a term that has become part of the brand of many higher education institutions in the United States. Dr. Tisdale-Fisher's observations about the difficulties encountered on the job market by graduate couples constitute another issue that could be addressed and resourced through the university's commitment to the diversity of their studentship.

Conclusion

As I conclude this chapter, I am confronting the ambivalence of my reserved optimism. My reservation is rooted in my measured confidence that individual solutions could coalesce into systemic change and in still tender recollections of moments when close friends had to leave US higher education. Yet, the fact that all of the four feminist professionals highly value their PhD training in WGS, maintained their commitment to feminism, and found applications for their feminist knowledge outside academe is uplifting. Their recommendations to foster different organizational cultures that combat isolation and resource competition; to give a more comprehensive consideration to feminist praxis and to resist delinking theory from community, social justice, policy, service, and administrative practice while training WGS PhDs; to revalue the interaction with communities and other institutional actors; to understand and revalue the different temporality of applied research and the tangibility of its results;

to follow through with the commitment to student diversity by paying attention to intersectional class disparities—all contribute to imagining and revaluing feminist professional futures alternative to academia. Surely, these points of reform will not solve all the problems. As in the case of Dr. Parsons, whose feminist professional future was enabled by a change in legislation in relation to gay marriage, many others would succeed only under conditions of further legislative or systemic changes, such as immigration reform, student debt forgiveness, minimum wage legislation, or child care reform.

Notes

1. The course was developed by Professor Mary Hawkesworth and Dr. Fatimah Williams Castro and was offered to PhD students in WGSS departments associated with the Consortium for Institutional Cooperation (CIC), the academic arm of the “Big 10,” a group of Research I institutions originally in the midwest of the United States. Rutgers and the University of Maryland joined the Big 10 in 2015. The online course was sponsored by the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies at Rutgers in 2016, but enrollment was open to any graduate student in the CIC. My thanks go to Professor Hawkesworth and Dr. Williams Castro for sharing with me their syllabus and course materials as well as for pointing me in the direction of the interviews conducted by Dr. Nafisa Tanjeem, who at the time was a PhD candidate and graduate assistant in the WGS department at Rutgers.
2. The entire series of interview are available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCgv7fNhb6TQF3BbpsONFKWzAP2WXe9aj>
3. There are approximately 20 US universities that offer doctoral programs in the interdisciplinary fields of women’s, gender, and sexuality studies. Graduate funding can come in the form of fellowships, graduate assistantships, and tuition remission; however, not all programs fund all admitted PhD students. As this chapter will show, the benefits of being a funded student run deeper than the financial level. Internal funding through teaching, research, and graduate assistantships creates social capital through varied mentoring and professional development opportunities. Most often, unfunded students seek university employment on their own in the form of part-time lectureships and hourly paid research or

administrative work. Seeking employment outside the university is perceived as potentially distracting students from their graduate studies, thus it is usually discouraged. Whereas the following list may not be exhaustive, it attests to the presence of women's, gender, and sexuality studies in both private and state higher education institutions and gives a sense of the geographical distribution of these PhD programs: Arizona State University (PhD in Gender Studies), Emory University (PhD in Women's Studies), Indiana University, Bloomington (PhD in Gender Studies), Ohio State University (PhD in Women's Studies), Oregon State University (PhD in Women's and Gender Studies), Rutgers University, New Brunswick (PhD in Women's and Gender Studies), Stony Brook University (PhD in Women's and Gender Studies), Texas Woman's University (PhD in Multicultural Women's and Gender Studies), University of Arizona (PhD in Women's Studies), University of California, Los Angeles (PhD in Women's Studies), University of California, Santa Barbara (PhD in Feminist Studies), University of California, Santa Cruz (PhD in Feminist Studies), University of Kansas, Lawrence (PhD in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies), University of Kentucky, Lexington (PhD in Women's Studies), University of Iowa, Iowa City (PhD in Women's Studies), University of Maryland, College Park (PhD in Women's Studies), University of Michigan (joint programs in Women's Studies and English, History, Psychology, or Sociology), University of Minnesota, Minneapolis (PhD in Women's Studies), and University of Washington, Seattle (PhD in Women's Studies).

4. The H-1B is a nonimmigrant visa in the United States, which allows US employers to temporarily employ foreign workers in specialty occupations.

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Feel the Fear and Killjoy Anyway: Being a Challenging Feminist Presence in Precarious Academia

Órla Meadhbh Murray

Introduction

Being a feminist killjoy (Ahmed 2010) is an uncomfortable position to hold. Sometimes this position is actively chosen and pursued as a political aim—challenging people around you, in your personal life, and through your work. Sometimes one is positioned as the killjoy by others due to presumed political beliefs or through being ‘out of place’ in the whiteness, the middle-classness, and the cissexist-ableist patriarchy of the academy. For many, just being present in academia is seen as challenging because it is a space that was not made by, or for, people ‘like you’. In this chapter I will explore how it feels to be a feminist killjoy in academia, focusing on early-career feminist academics¹ who are in precarious positions due to contract and/or visa status. This will be based on in-depth interviews and online questionnaires with seven other feminists about their experiences, alongside reflections on my experience as a PhD student and tutor in UK academia. I explain the feminist killjoy and precarity

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Y. Taylor, K. Lahad (eds.), *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University*, Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64224-6_8

in more detail, provide an overview of my methodology, participants' and my own positionality and finally present my analysis and some strategies of resistance.

The feminist killjoy is part of Sara Ahmed's (2017) broader discussions about happiness, institutional diversity, and doing feminism. Ahmed (2010) describes how the feminist killjoy is seen as creating bad feeling and disrupting the normal flow of things:

The feminist killjoy 'spoils' the happiness of others; she is a spoilsport because she refuses to convene, to assemble, or to meet up over happiness. In the thick sociality of everyday spaces, feminists are thus attributed as the origin of bad feeling, as the ones who ruin the atmosphere, which is how the atmosphere might be imagined (retrospectively) as shared.

(Ahmed 2010: 65)

The killjoy's presence is troubling because she disrupts 'happiness scripts', instructions for what we must do to be happy. Ahmed argues that there has been a 'happiness turn' in which the imperative, or duty, is to be seen as happy. Regardless of one's actual feelings, this is an encouragement to perform false happiness, which discourages or disallows dissent and covers up the labour involved in producing happiness. But happiness scripts are not neutral or easily followed by all.

As Addison (2012) argues, the 'happy worker' is often equated with the 'good worker', but certain people, for example, middle-class men, find it easier to fit in and to perform happiness in the workplace. This is because the presumed or 'ideal' academic staff member is not neutral; academic ideals and spaces are gendered, classed, and raced, alongside being presumed heterosexual, able-bodied, and non-religious or Christian (Addison 2012; Bridger and Shaw 2012; Ahmed 2017).

If one does not fit into the institutional norms and ideals, then it is harder work just to exist in the academia sphere, and one is more likely to be seen as disruptive. If one does not or cannot perform happiness in relation to dominant happiness scripts at work—in this case, in the academy—then they might be seen as disruptive, troublesome, a bad colleague, a feminist killjoy. Sometimes existing in a space is enough to be seen as a killjoy regardless of one's political intentions.

Through the figure of the feminist killjoy, I want to think through how feminists enacting their political beliefs in the academy might elicit negative responses from colleagues, management, and students. From ‘just existing’ as disruption to speaking out or organising against inequality, I will explore how this uncomfortable position is managed by individuals and what it says about how the academy is organised. In particular, I want to see how being positioned as the killjoy is experienced in the context of increasing precarity in UK higher education.

But first, what do I mean by precarity in academia? The University and College Union (UCU) (2016: 2) explains that precarity can refer to both short contracts, for example, nine- to twelve-month teaching contracts, and income and hours of work, for example, hourly paid staff who may not have consistent working hours and therefore do not have a reliable income. Many different types of contracts result in precariousness, but the central feature of all these arrangements is that employers take little responsibility for these staff, and thus the risk is deferred to employees who have to manage their own employment, often without access to the same maternity or redundancy rights as more securely employed staff.

Based on 2014/2015 data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency at least 53% of all academics employed in UK higher education are on insecure contracts (UCU 2016: 1). Others have named this increasing pool of insecure outsiders ‘disposable academics’ (Kelly-Irving 2013) and ‘the emergent academic proletariat’ (Goldstene 2013).

UCU identify three categories of precarious workers in UK higher education: PhD students who teach, professionals employed elsewhere who teach on the side, those whose main employment and income come from these precarious contracts, such as teaching staff on fixed-term/hourly paid contracts or contract research staff who depend on short-term funding to finance their role (UCU 2016: 2–3). I will be focusing on the first and third of these categories, those whose primary focus is on academia.

Many early-career academics move from hourly paid teaching during their PhD and immediately afterwards to fixed-term, fractional contracts, with hopeful promises of permanency, which might never materialise.

Fewer secure contracts encourages a culture of overworking in the hope of achieving a permanent contract, particularly for those who depend on their student or employment status for a visa: a doubly precarious situation. In the context of the neoliberalisation of UK academia,² working conditions within universities have worsened with increasing workloads, fewer secure contracts, and the normalisation of working for free in the hope of making oneself 'competitive' or 'REF-able'³ enough to remain and progress.

Precarity affects diversity. May (2011) highlights that 57% of all casual academics across Australian universities are women, and 52% are aged 35 or younger. But if we think of other intersections, the situation becomes even more complicated; citizenship, class, and caring responsibilities also affect one's ability to survive strings of casual contracts. In the UK, having insecure contracts make it impossible for those without the right to work to remain in UK universities, excluding those without British or European citizenship. If negotiating the financial insecurity of precarious work without financially secure partners or family to provide support, those who are single and/or without class privilege have no safety net. Pregnancy and caring responsibilities also result in more risky, more complicated, and less secure positions.⁴

This must be understood in the context of serious underrepresentation of women, particularly women of colour, at the higher echelons of UK universities. In 2014, it was reported that out of 18,500 UK professors, only 85 were black, and 17 were black women (Grove 2014). A more recent report by the Runnymede Trust identified 54 black women professors in the UK (Solanke 2017). Even if more women of colour are coming into academic positions, increasing casualisation makes the possibility of staying and progressing even more difficult. And this must be considered against the already difficult history of negotiating the 'malestream' whiteness and middle-classness of the academy.⁵

For those in precarious positions, to be disruptive and challenging might mean expulsion from the academy and possibly also the country. Such a reality encourages avoiding, delaying, or hiding perceived challenging behaviour in knowing that a permanent contract might never be obtained. Without a secure place in the academy, the tiring emotional work of being the feminist killjoy existing in a hostile

environment can quickly turn from exhausting and uncomfortable to a heavy anxiety, a silencing fear that stops the killjoy from challenging colleagues, management, students, and even expressing what they really think in their academic publications and presentations. So how do early-career feminist academics manage this? How to feel the fear and killjoy anyway?

Doing Feminist Research About Feminist Researchers: Methodology and Some Personal Reflection

This chapter is based on three in-depth interviews⁶ and three online questionnaires⁷ with seven other UK-based early-career feminist academics. All my participants are friends, most of whom I recruited after having informal discussions with them about precarious contracts, stress, and putting feminist principles into practice in academia. Four of my participants were PhD students at the time of the interviews and two were employed on fixed-term teaching or research contracts, all at universities in the UK. The seventh participant is an activist who considered becoming an academic but left UK academia after completing a masters due to institutional racism and the perceived negative impact staying in academia would have on her mental health and happiness.

This chapter emerged out of my on-going PhD fieldwork into how UK higher education is organised by texts.⁸ Alongside my PhD, I have been tutoring and lecturing for the past four years on an hourly paid contract and got involved in the UCU. These experiences gave me an insight into academic working conditions, with many problems centring on the use of zero-hour contracts.⁹ But perhaps one of the biggest problems in UK higher education is overworking, which for precariously employed academics often involves doing unpaid and unacknowledged work in order to fulfil duties in the hope of achieving a permanent contract (Lopes and Dewan 2015).

I initially set out to explore how early-career feminist academics negotiated their feminist principles in the classroom, with a particular interest in uncomfortable issues around challenging privilege and structural

inequality (Haritaworn 2011; Pereira 2012). I assumed that the spectre of bad student feedback would hang over the classroom, making feminist academics unwilling or even afraid to challenge students for fear of their ‘dissatisfaction’. I think this was partially because I was looking at the National Student Survey¹⁰ in my PhD research at the time, and so it occupied a lot of my thinking. However, in the interviews that I did, discussions of teaching were overwhelmingly positive and did not seem to evoke the sort of fear that I had anticipated. There were of course other fears tied up with teaching, primarily imposter syndrome—the fear that one is not good enough to be in one’s job that one is a fraud and will be exposed as such.¹¹ However, the classroom emerged as a space where it appeared to be easier to be challenging, for example, disrupting the white male academic canon by assigning different readings, bringing up topics such as colonialism, sexuality, gender identity and trans* activism, feminism, and racism, and sometimes just occupying the position of the lecturer or the tutor to disrupt the old white boys’ club of the academy. What became apparent in the interviews was that fear and anxiety around the precarious positioning of early-career feminists occupy was a much greater source of concern; the fear of not getting a job alongside the general emotional experience of being a challenging presence in the academy were more prevalent issues.

I began by interviewing Zara,¹² who was waiting to hear about the renewal of her fixed-term lecturing contract. She described how this period of waiting felt—‘very despondent ... paralysed, helpless, powerless ... immobile ... inertia ... I can’t make any plans for next week like let alone next year because I don’t know if you’re going to need me to work next week or not’. Zara is a queer cisgendered white British middle-class woman who was lecturing on a fixed-term contract in the social sciences at the time of the interview.

The second interview with Jax emerged from us having a coffee and chatting about our PhDs, which turned into a broader conversation about what it feels like to exist in the academy and how to survive it. Jax is a black heterosexual cisgendered middle-class woman from the UK doing a social sciences PhD. Central to this interview was racism, the whiteness of the academy and being positioned as a challenging presence due to being a black woman.

The third interview involved both Angela and Bob, who know each other well, having worked together before and being based at the same university. Both are queer white cisgendered middle-class European women who have lived in the UK for a long time. They are both doing humanities subjects; Bob is doing a part-time self-funded PhD and Angela is currently based at two universities, researching on fixed-term contracts alongside teaching on a casual contract. This discussion focused more on trade union activism and who is expected to be an academic.

I asked questions about participants' academic background and current position, their identification as feminist academics, and whether or not they saw themselves as being a 'challenging presence' in academia. Being challenging was discussed in relation to teaching, in interactions with peers and colleagues, and in interactions with the university, including front-line administrative staff and central management/HR. I did not explicitly focus on experiences of doing research; rather I centred discussions about the overall experience and emotions around being in academia.

Based on the interviews, I wrote up a more formalised questionnaire to send to three additional participants—Carlota, Beth, and Maria—all of whom experienced being at UK universities on Tier-4 visas.¹³ Carlota is a queer/asexual Latina middle-class cisgendered woman who works outside academia now, having finished her undergraduate and master's degrees in politics in the UK. While Carlota initially wanted to pursue a PhD and an academic career, she left because 'academia was not worth my sanity and survival'. Beth was a PhD student in the humanities at the time of our discussion, but she has now moved back to New Zealand and is currently not pursuing an academic career; she is a white cisgendered heterosexual middle-class New Zealander. Maria is a white bi-ethnic queer cisgendered middle-class woman from the USA and is a self-funded PhD student in the social sciences. These participants' precarious visa status was a very important discussion that was missing from my three interviews, hence why I wanted to include them, despite being unable to interview them in person.

I am a white, middle-class, queer, mentally ill, cisgendered Irish woman who has lived in the Scotland for most of the past eight years studying and working in Edinburgh.¹⁴ As I write this chapter, I am beginning the

fourth year of my PhD. My four years of masters and PhD funding from the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) have ended, so I am tutoring a lot in order to self-fund my fourth year. The stress of balancing more teaching with writing has exacerbated my very high anxiety due to pre-existing mental health problems. Due to this, I have taken a six-month interruption of studies in order to reduce my stress, and also to make some money through teaching. I think it is important to include this in order for you, the reader, to understand my background and positionality.

This acknowledgement of mental ill health and financial negotiation also fractures the positive achievement narratives so prevalent in academia. If you read my student profile on the University of Edinburgh website, or my LinkedIn profile, or my CV, these tell the tales of my academic successes. They say ‘I am REF-able’, I am a good teacher, and I do academic ‘service’ for my department, therefore you should hire me. They are both necessary for continuation in academia and are also helpful for me in moments of self-doubt when imposter syndrome hits. However, they are artificially clean and tidy lists of achievements behind which hide moments of self-doubt, tears, stress, and getting physically ill due to anxiety. But these experiences are not only personal or confined to myself, they are inevitably tied up in national and global trends in higher education. My experiences are couched in structural privileges and oppressions, in the history of these institutions, and the current socio-political climate. They are structurally facilitated, encouraged, and tolerated, and ones that I am complicit in. When I do unpaid teaching and administrative work, write more publications than is necessary at my stage of academia, present at more conferences, I am participating in our collective raising of the bar, pushing the expected entrance requirements to the hallowed halls of elite universities. And when I hide my mental ill health and financial insecurity, I participate in the covering up of structural funding problems and the emotional impact of insecure contracts and overworking.

As a feminist academic, I am constantly trying to work out how to challenge neoliberal, exclusionary practices from within the institution—asking to be paid for the work that I do, working less, taking the weekend off, not sending emails at night or at the weekend, challenging the ‘always

on, always more' mentality of academia. However, I am simultaneously also trying to position myself as 'competitive' enough to keep the door open to an academic future, which often means working unpaid, doing more, working weekends, sending emails at anti-social hours. My political aims and the practices needed to stay in academia are often contradictory aims, or at least unhappy bedfellows. Writing this book chapter with some personal reflection becomes a cheeky attempt to mix both aims; publish more, but within that publication include 'inappropriate' or unhappy elements that make me (and perhaps also you, the reader) uncomfortable.

However, it is also important to acknowledge that my feeling comfortable in bringing these 'private' emotions into the public sphere is also indicative of my privileges and the benefits they afford me. It is perhaps easier to be so 'confessional' or self-reflective due to my middle-classness and my whiteness which mean I fit more easily into the academic sphere. Taylor (2012) explains 'coming out' or situating oneself as an academic is not a neutral exercise but one that requires resources in order 'to tell (legitimate) stories' (265); not all stories are heard, and some are preferred. This should not preclude the telling of such frank stories but instead warn us not to be overly congratulatory about vulnerability or make it 'compulsory' to tell such personal stories as a feminist academic. Sometimes it feels too difficult or too precarious to be so revealing.

While being self-reflective and aware of one's positionality and power is important, this does not magic away privilege and power, and of course there are limits to everyone's ability to be self-critical (Gouldner 1971). As Ahmed discusses, being critical can lead to a reluctance to acknowledge one's own complicity and participation in the reproduction of whiteness: 'the critical white subjects, by seeing their whiteness, might *not* see themselves as participating in whiteness at the same way' (2012: 179). If I acknowledge that my self-critique is limited and want to act against my own epistemological privilege as both a researcher who has final say on the writing of this chapter and also as a body who is less 'out of place' in the academy due to my whiteness and middle-classness, then I need to try to be as accountable as possible.

As part of my attempts to be accountable, I sent my three interview transcripts to the four interviewees afterwards for them to okay. I also

sent the second draft of this chapter to all my participants for them to review and they all confirmed that I was not misrepresenting them. Before finishing the second draft, I presented my analysis at a conference,¹⁵ which was very helpful in getting feedback and gauging responses to my claims. The response was very positive, with numerous attendees providing reassurance that my analysis accurately represented what they saw and experienced in UK higher education. In particular, two academics spoke to me after my talk, expressing thanks for my presentation and telling me that it accurately conveyed what they had experienced as women of colour in academia—microaggressions, feeling out of place, and being pigeonholed as ‘difficult’ or ‘aggressive’. This felt reassuring because it meant that my results chimed with people other than my participants, particularly on issues of racism, because this is something that I have no personal experience of and am therefore slightly more nervous about making claims about.

However, these discussions also brought up the discomfort around being a white woman talking about race; it felt appropriate for me to gain academic or interpersonal kudos for speaking about race from a position of racial privilege. My white privilege, particularly in white academia, makes it easier to be challenging on race and for my comments to be seen as ‘unbiased’. I think my own discomfort around this is important to acknowledge because bringing up race is disruptive in the whiteness of the academy, but is read as less disruptive when raised by a white woman because my presence is less in question to begin with. It is to this topic that I now turn—who is seen as challenging in the academy, and how much choice do different feminists have in being seen as challenging?

Killing Joy Is Not Always a Choice, but Either Way It Is Hard Work

Some feminists can choose to be the feminist killjoy in some situations but not others, choosing when to challenge and when to ‘pass’ as unchallenging. Whether for self-preservation, through exhaustion, or from fear of reprisal, there are moments when the feminist killjoy decides not to

kill joy, and instead to go along with things, to keep the peace. However, some killjoys cannot choose their moments because their very existence is a challenge in that space or they have challenged so much already that their reputation precedes them. For the killjoy who does not get to choose, her disruption is anticipated or expected and projected onto her whatever she does. The degree of choice and ability to 'pass' as not disruptive are different depending on intersecting identities and how well these fit into the institution.

Through these discussions, a very clear difference emerged between the women of colour and the white women. Carlota and Jax, both women of colour, explained how their very presence was felt to be challenging because they 'brought up' race. Regardless of what they did or said, they both discussed being perceived as more political, more radical, or more challenging than they intended and this was down to them being women of colour. This sense that to exist as a person of colour in a white institution is to be 'out of place', to not fit in, and to be challenging regardless of intent.

Zara, Angela, and Bob all explicitly said that they were *not* a challenging presence based on their whiteness and middle-classness; their race and class allowed them to fit in with the institution and not be seen as inherently challenging by existing in that space. Zara did acknowledge that she brings up other diversity issues and that being younger, not married, and holding an ambiguous position in terms of whether or not she has a partner, and by extension, whether or not she is straight, is 'a bit challenging', but concludes 'I don't think that my presence there is really challenging that much actually'.

Beth was the only white participant to readily identify her gender as constituting a challenging presence. Maria did not explicitly mention her identity when discussing being challenging, but instead focused on her political activism, her feminism and trade unionism.

However, all my participants acknowledged that they were challenging in some way, and that this resulted in feeling fearful, stressed, anxious, and uncomfortable, but also sometimes a sense of 'moral satisfaction' (Maria) at challenging injustice. There was a strong sense from some of the participants that they were not challenging enough, a sort of activist imposter syndrome. Jax explained 'sometimes I feel like all I'm doing

really is just writing and researching about what I want to write and research about and actually what's so challenging about that?

As already mentioned, Zara was initially very reluctant to identify herself as a challenging presence both on the basis of her identities and on the basis of her activities: 'I think that in a lot of ways I just do what I'm told and deliver what's expected of me ... I don't think there's anyone in the department who has taken the reins of killing joy, but maybe—having this conversation is making me want to consciously do that more'. Zara seemed weary throughout the interview, which was partially due to it taking place at the end of a long working day, but it also seemed to be because she was resigned to the belief that she was not that challenging a presence, or at least not as challenging as she would like to be. I felt like a feminist killjoy in painstakingly asking her questions about whether or not she was challenging, because this seemed to reinforce the sense that she wasn't challenging enough. For example, she said 'I think that I introduce questions of gender where there weren't before ... But like where does it go, what does it do?' I felt like I had to remind Zara that she was challenging and that these seemingly minor acts did make a difference.

This was initially confusing to me as my impression of Zara had always been that she was a challenging presence, particularly through the way she teaches, bring up structural inequality and intersectional feminist discussions alongside disrupting hierarchical teaching dynamics. Later on when discussing how she put her feminism into practice in teaching, she began to acknowledge that maybe she was more challenging than she was giving herself credit for: 'I think just asking to be taken seriously, and putting on the mantle of academic legitimacy in that context is still maybe challenging actually, to you know, all the expectations that a professor is old and man and grey haired ... Yeah, yeah, so maybe that—maybe that is a disruptive presence actually'.

I spoke to Zara about the interview a few months after it had taken place, reflecting back on it and updating her with how writing this chapter was going. In this conversation I mentioned her reluctance to see herself as a challenging presence. We also talked about how interviewing friends is great for rapport and trust but also that there are some pitfalls. Zara explained that because she liked and respected me and wanted me to like and respect her that this affected what she said and how she

presented it. Thus she was perhaps reluctant to say things that she thought would make her seem like a 'bad feminist' or to overclaim how challenging she was. I looked back over a brief reflection I had written immediately after doing the interview with Zara, and this quote jumped out at me: 'it felt like discussing whether or not she thought she was a feminist killjoy, or how her feminism played out in her job, was an implicit judgement of her. Which I totally feel as well about my own feminism—it is never enough, and when others question it, it feels judgmental'.¹⁶ I think in the interview with Zara our rapport may have led her to underplay how challenging a presence she was for fear of overclaiming, alongside potentially experiencing my questioning as implicitly judging 'just how feminist she really was'.

Moving onto Beth's discussion, she explained how her being a woman was challenging as she was doing a PhD in a 'male-dominated field, both in terms of writers treated as canonical and the academics undertaking this research'. Her research focused on writers, half of whom were men, and half women, and she wrote that this decision was challenged multiple times throughout her PhD, the implication being that this challenged the 'malestream' canon and was therefore political. She highlights her former supervisor, an older white man, using 'offensive, gendered terms and betraying a complete lack of respect for me as an academic' alongside explaining how he had a reputation for asking students 'deliberately nasty questions' after presentations. These moments of exclusion and denigration from more established academics, which were not limited to her former supervisor or men, made her feel less confident speaking in academic contexts.

Beth also sometimes felt patronised by other academics due to her femme appearance at the start of her PhD; she explains cutting her long hair short, and that this marked a shift away from being patronised. This fits in with Joan Acker's (1990: 152) discussion about the gender of organisations and jobs: 'the abstract worker is actually a man, and it is the man's body, its sexuality, minimal responsibility in procreation, and conventional control of emotions that pervades work and organisational processes. Women's bodies ... are suspect, stigmatised, and used as grounds for control and exclusion'. While this discussion presumes a cisgendered subject, ignoring non-binary and trans* individuals, the general argument

applies outwith a cisgendered binary: the closer a worker's body is read as fitting this ideal worker, the more easily they fit and move within institutions.

These examples of Beth's gender being seen as challenging connected to a longer conversation about institutional sexism that I had in the interview with Angela and Bob. Bob explained how men academics would often discuss gender and power relations in their research and teaching while simultaneously having inappropriate relationships with supervisees and perpetuating misogyny in their everyday practices. This split between what they say and what they do is a particularly painful one to negotiate as it can be harder to challenge and more disappointing when a supposedly 'good man' turns out to be a misogynist. Bob explained that academia takes gender seriously in conversation, but then things do not change in terms of 'what they go out and do, who they go out and hire'. This is a form of 'non-performativity', as discussed by Ahmed (2017): 'when naming something does not bring something into effect or (more strongly) when something is named in order not to bring something into effect' (Ahmed 2017: 106–107). Ahmed discusses non-performativity in relation to university diversity policies, whereby saying a university is good at diversity and performing diversity through documents and speeches avoids dealing with the institutional racism that pervades the institution.

Angela called this 'glossy fake equality' in the neoliberal university in her interview, whereby the inclusion of some white middle-class women in the academy is lauded as a major achievement for gender equality and diversity, without acknowledging the enduring race and class inequalities and not acknowledging the intersecting nature of identity. This was brought into sharp relief by discussions with Jax and Carlota about experiencing the academy as women of colour.

Jax explained that 'just trying to be in academia is the hardest part of the PhD process for me ... being in academia as a black woman with it entails so many microaggressions¹⁷ and so many questions and so many moments that feel like they are ultimately a critique of you and your very existence and the fact that you are existing in a space that wasn't really created for you'. When I asked Jax to identify specific examples of how she was made to feel out of place, she said it was hard to pinpoint exact

encounters; rather it was produced by constantly being asked the same questions fundamentally challenging the importance of her research, or other responses such as awkward silences and awkward laughter. This moment was particularly interesting as my question did not fit with her lived experience; I was looking for dramatic stories of racist incidents, and Jax's response challenged the framing of my question. It is not about particular incidents (while they do occur and are important to acknowledge) but rather it is the whole climate, the feeling, the atmosphere of academia. And what is central to these microaggressions, or what Jax called 'Othering encounters' is that it is the cumulative nature of all these moments, not necessarily the intention, that make one feel out of place.

Carlota also expressed feeling out of place, which contributed to her overall exhaustion of existing in academia. In answer to the question 'Do you ever feel fear?', she replied: 'All the time. Fear of failure. Fear of knowing. Fear of not knowing enough. Fear of not being white enough. Fear of what some digits will mean for me and my future. I was always afraid of telling my true opinions because of fear of being seen as too radical and unwilling to compromise ... I think ultimately my fear was that I am not as smart as they are, as the academia is. I am not worthy of stepping into the high echelons of academic work'. Carlota explicitly linked this to her being a woman of colour and from the Global South, alongside her reputation as the 'activist', the 'Marxist', and therefore as personally and politically disruptive.

Carlota explained that existing in academia as a woman of colour, as a Latina woman from South America, was exhausting. She continuously came up against institutional and collective peer resistance to engaging with race or colonialism in her politics classes, which resulted in her challenging and often trying to teach her resistant peers and academic staff: 'It also felt exhausting sometimes, because needing to say the same thing over and over again. A lot of those things are simple basic things like racial critique to white feminist politics and claiming the humanity of people of colour'. Because she would speak out and be critical she got feedback from lecturers about her "overtly critical or impassionate" point of view ... writing is 'not academic enough', which contributed to her sense of imposter syndrome, of feeling she was not good enough for academia, that she did not belong there, she did not fit. Ahmed's (2017: 125)

words seem all too relevant here: institutions are like ‘an old garment. It acquires the shape of those who tend to wear it; it becomes easier to wear if you have that shape’.

This sense of not fitting in extended to Jax’s research, whereby she told me about numerous incidents of academics viewing her research as political and radical because she only interviewed women of colour and focused on race. This was despite her topic and approach not being explicitly political at the beginning of her PhD and her initial reluctance to identify as a feminist. Now, however, she said she had ‘chosen to live up to the label ... [because] these experiences have politicised me more and more’. In the white academy, her work is political and radical, because to ‘bring in’ and focus on women of colour disrupts the whiteness of research foci.

From discussions with my participants, the white women seemed to have a greater element of choice in their being seen as challenging. While white women might get a name for themselves as the troublemaker, for example, Angela and Maria’s trade unionism, they are initially presumed to belong and to be unchallenging. While white women killjoys might begin to be defined by their past behaviour and thus be presumed to be killing joy even when they are choosing to stay silent, there will always be spaces and people who might not know them in which they have the choice to ‘pass’ or to ‘come out’ as a challenging presence. Of course, this choice is not a free one, it is fraught with the emotional work of pretending to be okay, holding in the anger and upset at a sexist remark, at a racist joke, at a dismissive comment. And it is to this topic of emotional energy and exhaustion that I will now turn.

For those who consistently speak out and challenge, it can become exhausting. Angela’s extensive trade union work meant she was often directly challenging university HR and management. She made the distinction between the more emotional work of challenging immediate line managers and colleagues, as opposed to the slightly more impersonal university central bureaucracy. Both are exhausting work, but the emotional impact of challenging one’s colleagues was highlighted as more emotionally fraught or complicated:

... in one day I have two meetings with HR, and the afternoon I was sitting there like okay how many shit—how—how many times can I mention

things that are bullshit ... And they hate me #. ¹⁸ I mean I hate them, so— (But how do you experience that then emotionally?) [sighes] ... its more difficult with a line manager to be like, what you're doing is shit, because there's also this emotional stuff and I won't be a good colleague and so on. ... [sighes] I think tiredness has a lot to do with it, I'm like you know what fuck this, I'm tired, you can fire me I don't care, I don't—you know. What are you going to do? ... afterwards ... I was completely exhausted and I went home and just basically did nothing and ate ice cream and was super tired.

Throughout her interview, Angela sighed a lot, which I took as expressing a weariness born of constantly being the killjoy. Alongside this, the bottomless trade union work was overwhelming, especially with not enough workers actively involved in UCU to share the burden.

The tiredness around being overworked, both in one's academic role and in one's activism often turned into fear when in a precarious position. Maria and Zara both explicitly connected fear of being too challenging to fear of not getting an academic job. Maria wrote, 'I feel fear in academia constantly, most of it having to do with my livelihood ... [also] the threat of sexual harassment or sexual violence from male colleagues in my future career is a real concern, and one that I know my future employers won't take seriously'.

Maria is on an hourly paid temporary contract for teaching and ad hoc research work and is also on a Tier-4 visa. This doubly precarious position means that when she directly challenges the institution, there is the fear of not getting more paid work, becoming less employable in the long run, and these directly affect her ability to stay in the UK on a visa. She comments that this situation is exploited by universities who know how precarious a position early-career academics are in: 'administrators and management know that the academic job market is in a hideous state, and they rely on our fear of unemployment to keep us quiet and compliant when institutional power is abused ... there is an intense feeling that if we don't do everything in our power to ingratiate ourselves to powerful people in universities, our necks are on the guillotine'.

Zara also expressed this tired uncertainty around whether or not challenging behaviour would affect her employability when reflecting on the

delays to her recent fixed-term contract renewal. Zara was eventually told that her six-month fractional contract would be extended by 12 months one day before her initial contract ended:

...’I’ll have a firm answer for you one way or another next week’ was repeated every week for twelve weeks [by her line manager]... I don’t think I ever expressed any kind of frustration ... I think I managed my professional self in such a way to maintain this politeness and—but I think that obviously the subtext was I felt like ‘what the fuck is this’ ... my fear is that if I’m—if I don’t make myself likeable by people in power then—then I’m not employable ... when you’re on a temporary contract you feel like you know six months, but that’s six months of an interview for whether or not you get slightly longer ... it’s hard not to see everything that you say and do through the prism of like, is this going to extend my contract or not, which obviously makes you less likely to either express a genuine emotion in the workplace or speak out about injustices that you see.

The emotional management of one’s presentation of self at work often involved the exhausting work of repressing one’s emotions, appearing pleasant and happy, and being seen as a good neoliberal subject, a ‘happy worker’. When discussing the emotional toll of doing trade union work within the university, Angela states: ‘I mean I’m a woman, I was educated to only be nice all the time’. It is, however, tiring pretending to be nice all the time, but also perhaps there is a higher price when one is a ‘not nice’ woman because of gender stereotypes about caring women.

Killjoy Tactics and Concluding Thoughts

The final question that I asked my participants was ‘Do you have any specific tactics or strategies that you have to manage being a “challenging presence” or “feminist killjoy” in academia and any associated emotions?’ Their responses were varied but fitted into three categories:

1. Managing
2. Challenging
3. Refusal/exit

The first two are almost contradictory strategies: being silent and getting on with things and speaking out, refusing to be silenced. But what runs through both these strategies is emotional existence work: performing happiness, holding back anger, or bearing making people uncomfortable and being 'hated' for being the killjoy, as Angela mentioned.

Managing involves a mixture of collective self-care such as providing emotional and practical support and solidarity to other killjoys—this was seen as central to survival. Alongside, attempts to avoid being seen as challenge through tactics such as emotional repression and the masking of emotions. Jax spoke about trying to make herself 'palatable' to the white institution and to other academics, Beth and Zara spoke about wanting to be likeable, and Angela and Zara spoke about the gendered expectations of being 'nice'. For some, passing as being nice, not challenging, and not disrupting the flow were tactics used to survive, because there were too many incidents and microaggressions to challenge without getting burnt out. Being silent was hard work, but sometimes it was harder work to speak out, and so silence was endured and perhaps grievances expressed with other killjoys, in more friendly spaces, rather than directly challenging the source of the grievance.

But of course, sometimes speaking out, refusing to be silent, and actively challenging was chosen as a strategy by my participants. Zara, Angela, Bob, Maria, and Jax all spoke extensively about challenging increasing workloads, precarious contracts, and unpaid work. They challenged the idea that academia is such a privileged workplace that academics must appreciate their position and not get angry or challenged. As Jax said in her interview, 'the implicit message is you should be happy and lucky that you have got a space here, now pipe down about the stuff to do with yourself'.

For those in more secure positions—permanent staff or those on more secure contracts, there is an imperative to listen to, acknowledge, and advocate for precariously employed staff. As Bob discussed, they often act as 'gatekeepers' and insecure staff need them to actively open gates, for example, line managers ensuring tutors or research assistants get paid for all their work. However, Angela made the point that often permanent staff are so overworked that doing such solidarity work might push them over the edge, highlighting that there are structural problems that affect

everyone, even if it manifests differently for permanent and insecure staff. Angela and Bob both provided suggestions for how all academics could change their practices, for example, trying not to email at night or at the weekend as this creates the expectation for other staff to email at these times, expanding the working day and eating up any possibility of time off or leisure time. Additionally, being open and honest about taking sick leave or taking holidays, rather than perpetuating the culture of overworking and the narrative that to succeed in academia you can never take time off. While everyone can participate in these actions, those with more security and higher up the academic ladder have a greater power to shape the academic culture by setting expectations and limits that are less intense for lower-level academics to follow.

For white academics there is a particular imperative to acknowledge our complicity in perpetuating the white canon, but to acknowledge that this complicity also affords us opportunity to challenge from within. As all my participants discussed, white academics need to bring up race and colonialism, to challenge each other and our students and to engage with the politics of citation—one of the few things academics have almost total control over is reading lists, and so disrupting the white male Western canon is possible in our own classes. While this takes time, which is in short supply in the neoliberal academy, this is necessary work to carve out time for. This is part of the killjoy killing other feminists' joy and happiness by challenging particular feminist narratives of success—'things have improved'—it is important for white women academics to challenge diversity narratives that co-opt our existence, acknowledging that things change more quickly for some than 'Others'.

And lastly, refusal and exit are the final weapon in a feminist's arsenal. In her interview, Zara discussed leaving a research position due to bullying and discriminatory behaviour from the principal investigator. This ultimate refusal to participate in structural inequality is one that has massive consequences; for Zara it meant giving up a well-paid, secure, and prestigious research position. While very difficult, she felt able to do this knowing she had a community and contacts at the university where she did her PhD and was able to pick up casual work there. Similarly, Sara Ahmed's resignation from Goldsmith's amidst controversy about a lack of institutional response to sexual harassment provides an example

of challenge through refusal to participate anymore, but as she acknowledges, sometimes 'other feminists in the same situation might stay because they cannot afford to leave' (Ahmed 2016).

It can often feel like we cannot afford to be challenging presences, especially from a position of precarity. When overworked and exhausted, killing joy sounds like the last thing one might want to do, but for those whose very existence is read as disruptive, they cannot help but kill joy. Different types of happiness can come out of being the feminist killjoy because while it is a project of destruction, it is also one that clears the way for something new.

Notes

1. I define early-career feminist academics broadly, to include those who have pursued postgraduate study, identify as feminists, and want to (or wanted to) pursue academic careers. This is similar to what Lara McKenzie (2017) calls 'aspiring academics', focusing on those who seek stable academic employment, rather than a more fixed definition of 'early-career' such as those within five years (Thwaites and Pressland 2017) or eight years (Locke et al. 2016) of a PhD.
2. I understand neoliberalism to broadly refer to the changing organisation of UK higher education through increased student numbers, variable tuition fees, the encouragement of a university 'market', including competing for funding and students, and treating students as consumers of an educational product (Holmwood 2011a, b; Bailey and Freedman 2011; Brown and Carasso 2013; Collini 2013; Whelan et al. 2013; Holmwood 2014).
3. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for 'assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions' (REF 2014). The system impacts how much funding an institution receives and contributes to the ranking of UK universities, which impacts status and affects student applications and attendance, which subsequently affect tuition fee revenue. Being 'REF-able' means 'one has enough publications of sufficient quality within the REF period (five to six years) to be included in the department's submission to the REF' (McCulloch 2017).
4. For a recent discussion of early-career academic motherhood, see Bosanquet (2017).

5. See Tokarczyk and Fay (1993) on working-class women academics and Benjamin (1997) on black women academics. For more up-to-date work on the experiences of black women and women of colour in UK academic, see Mirza (2006, 2015), Rollock (2012a, b), and Ahmed (2012).
6. The first two interviews involved one participant each. The third interview involved two participants who already knew each other. My approach was informal and feminist, in that I wanted to provide a space for my participants to explore and co-construct with me the answers to my research questions, alongside being cognisant of the power dynamics between researcher and researched and trying to take my lead from them (Letherby 2003; Hesse-Biber 2006).
7. I used online questionnaires to speak to people I was unable to interview in person due to them either living elsewhere or due to limited time and availability meaning a meet up was too difficult to fit in before the chapter deadline.
8. My PhD uses Dorothy Smith's (2005) approach, institutional ethnography, in which text is understood to mean any materially replicable thing that carries meaning, for example, documents, digital texts, and videos.
9. Most casual contracts at the University of Edinburgh were changed to guaranteed hours contracts after UCU challenged the widespread use of zero-hours contracts (BBC News 2013).
10. The National Student Survey (NSS) is a yearly student satisfaction survey of final-year undergraduate students in the UK. It has become increasingly important, not just as a marker of student satisfaction, but also because it is often taken as a proxy for quality of teaching and course provision. In my PhD research, I look at how universities in the UK use the NSS, both to market their courses with 'high scores' and also to pressure teaching and other front-line staff over 'low scores'.
11. As discussed in Maddie Breeze's chapter in this volume, imposter syndrome or imposter phenomenon is prevalent amongst high achieving women (Clance and Imes 1978) and is particularly prevalent in academia. While it is often discussed in relation to women, the experience of imposter syndrome will of course be different depending on intersecting identity categories and career stage. For example, Tokarczyk and Fay (1993) alongside Long et al. (2000) discuss the imposter syndrome experiences of working-class women academics, and Bannatyne (2015) discusses the experiences of emerging and early-career academics.

12. All names are pseudonyms chosen with the participants to protect their anonymity. This is also why I am somewhat vague about certain aspects of my participants, to avoid them being identifiable.
13. Required for studying in the UK as a non-European Union international student.
14. While explaining my identities in this brief and somewhat abstract way does not engage with nuances of situated and relational identity, privilege and oppression, it does give a useful indication of 'who I am' and how I might usually move through higher education.
15. Educational Futures and Fractures Conference, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK—Friday 24 February 2017.
16. After my interview with Zara, I wrote a brief reflection on the interview. I did not get a chance to record my immediate impressions after the other two interviews.
17. 'Racial microaggressions are brief, everyday interactions that send denigrating messages to people of colour because they belong to a racially minoritised group' (Rollock 2012b: 517).
18. #—this symbol indicates laughter in my transcripts.

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Imposter Syndrome as a Public Feeling

Maddie Breeze

Introduction

This chapter is about re-thinking ‘imposter syndrome’¹ as a public feeling. When I think about doing (early career) feminist work in neoliberal universities, there are things that I’ve run away from, things that I’ve fought, and definitely things that I’ve failed at. Another noticeable affect is less of a flight, less of fight, and not exactly a failure, but a kind of paralysis, getting stuck, more like the ‘freeze’ of some small mammals’ response to perceived threat, playing dead instead of fighting or fleeing. I think that *feeling like an imposter*, and an attendant ‘freeze’ or stuck-ness, is another important aspect of the affective landscape of feminist academic work, especially when this work takes place in neoliberal universities.

I thought about getting stuck a lot while I was doing a PhD, and this led me to Cvetkovich’s (2007, 2012) work on public feelings. Cvetkovich’s (2007: 465) project set out to explore the role of feelings in public life,

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Y. Taylor, K. Lahad (eds.), *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University*, Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64224-6_9

including understanding neoliberalism in ‘affective terms’. Part of this endeavor was de-pathologizing and de-stigmatizing negative affects—including those associated with depression such as inertia, despair, apathy, and indifference—and reconceptualizing them as resources for political action, and therefore as sites of agency (ibid). Cvetkovich (2012: 202) emphasizes the ‘willingness to encounter impasse or lack of knowledge’, which can accompany emotional expression, since ‘depression or being stuck can be an invitation to that which we don’t yet know’.

Cvetkovich (2007, 2012) characterized depression as ordinary and mundane; likewise ‘imposter syndrome’ is nothing if not ordinary, and is seemingly common among academics across discipline, career stages, social locations, and—in my experience—is something of a running joke between colleagues and friends. The seeming ubiquity of the feelings associated with ‘imposter syndrome’ among academics can be seen in higher education blogs and social media, where academics share ‘subjective experiences of contemporary academic labouring’ (Gill and Donaghue 2016: 91). Platforms such as *Times Higher Education* feature personal stories, think pieces, and advice on imposter phenomena (McMillan 2016; Thompson 2016). These kinds of sharing are important for transforming putatively private experiences into public statements. For Gill and Donaghue (2016: 91), however, ‘they remain locked into a profoundly individualistic framework that turns away from systemic or collective politics’ and offer individualized ‘coping solutions’ instead. This is precisely where re-thinking ‘imposter syndrome’ as a public feeling intervenes. While feelings of imposterism are commonly understood as widespread among academics (McMillan 2016; Thompson 2016), it does not follow that these are felt equally or that the affect carries the same meaning across discipline, career stage, contract type, and intersections of class, gender, race and ethnicity, sexuality, disability, and factors such as caring responsibilities or first generation in higher education (HE) status. I want to know what happens if we think of affective regimes of fraudulence, inauthenticity, inadequacy, and the paralyzing fear of ‘getting found out’, as social, political, and public.

I am at the very beginning stages of a research project investigating imposter syndrome as a public feeling in education. Following Cvetkovich, and feminist sociologies of emotions and queer theories of affect (Ahmed

2012; Berlant 2011; Gould 2009; Halberstam 2011; Hochschild 1983; Sedgwick 2003), this broader project will (1) situate the affective range of ‘imposter syndrome’ in social and political context, mapping the emotional landscape of feelings of deficiency, fraudulence, and inauthenticity, in HE according to intersecting forms of social inequality; (2) theorize ‘imposter syndrome’ as something like a ‘diagnostic of power’ (Abu-Lughod 1990) asking what it can tell us about shifts in the structure and governance of HE, including endemic marketization, the rise of entrepreneurialism (Taylor 2014) and associated workforce casualization, performativity (Ball 2003), and audit cultures (Burrows 2012); and (3) re-think ‘imposter syndrome’ not as an individual deficiency or private problem of faulty self-esteem to be overcome, but instead as a resource for action and site of agency in contemporary HE (Cvetkovich 2007, 2012).

In this chapter I focus on this third aspect and take a step towards theorizing imposter syndrome as a resource for action and a site of agency, focusing on feminist epistemologies, and laboring feminist subjectivities, in neoliberal universities. Firstly I briefly contextualize this endeavor in relation to (1) the ‘inequality regimes’ (Acker 2006: 443) that characterize contemporary UK HE and (2) shifts in the structure and governance of higher education institutions (HEIs), both in conversation with a review of existing studies of imposter phenomena and theory and research on emotion and academic work. I then shift to thinking about ‘imposter syndrome’ as a potential source of action and agency, in relation to the feminist ambivalences of being ‘within and against’ university institutions, as feminist academics are both complicit with and struggle against the neoliberal university. To explore this further, I present a piece of semi-fictional auto-ethnography about feeling like an imposter, which draws on precedents for using personal narratives in analyses of academic labor (Gill 2010, 2014; Taylor 2013) alongside those for writing fiction as a mode of inquiry as well as a method of data presentation (Inckle 2010; Leavy 2013; Sparkes 2007; Watson 2016).

Finally I discuss imposterism as a potential resource for action and site of agency in relation to being a feminist and doing feminist work in neoliberal universities; in relation to feminist epistemologies and the project of making knowledge claims that unsettle the terms and definition of valid, legitimate, truthful knowledge, *and* of ‘good’, successful academic

labor. This means reading imposter syndrome and feminist scholarship through each other, asking who gets to be a knowing subject, and how we know what we know. The chapter concludes by drawing out the implications of feeling like a (feminist) imposter in neoliberal universities and how both feelings of fraudulence and inauthenticity, of 'not belonging' and 'not being good enough', can be refigured as agentic resources within and against the neoliberal university. Feeling ambivalently academic *and* feminist in the neoliberal university means creating alternatives to conventional understandings of success and belonging (continuing long-standing feminist projects of critically expanding definitions of 'work', including naming domestic and emotional labor *as work*). Just as doing feminist teaching and research means creating alternatives to conventional ways of knowing, and re-thinking imposter syndrome as a public feeling shows how both of these projects are implicated in each other.

Imposter Syndrome in Social and Political Context

'Imposter syndrome' was named in psychological literature in the late 1970s (Clance and Imes 1978; Clance 1985) and refers to feelings of not belonging, of out-of-place-ness, and the conviction that one's competence, success, and likeability are fundamentally fraudulent, that it is only a matter of time before this is discovered, before being *found out*. Feeling like an imposter involves the suspicion that signifiers of professional success (which might include promotion, publication, prizes, award of a permanent contract, award of *any* contract, grant funding, student evaluations, prizes, the 'expert status' of editorial positions, leadership responsibilities) have somehow been awarded *by mistake* or achieved through a *convincing performance*, a kind of deception. 'Imposter syndrome' conveys not only an inability to recognize one's own success and internalize esteem indicators but a conviction of fraudulence and inauthenticity. The sensation of having somehow 'tricked' students, colleagues, employers, interview panels, peer reviewers, and others with a convincing performance combines with the fear of being unmasked, not

only as incompetent but as a fraud as well. So imposter syndrome implies underlying feelings of inadequacy and deficiency, but also conveys a particular felt-as inauthentic or fraudulent relationship to indicators of belonging and achievement.

In popular discourse imposter syndrome is often framed as an individual problem, to be overcome, for instance, by keeping a list of achievements to remind oneself of evidenced accomplishments, by listening to senior colleagues describe their own feelings of imposterism (Thompson 2016), or by talking about one's own doubts and uncertainties (Collett and Avelis 2013). The 'CV of failures' serves as an example of this latter (Stefan 2010). Haushofer's (2016) failure CV is available online and includes the 'meta-failure' that 'this darn CV of Failures has received way more attention than my entire body of academic work'. Examples such as this transform private experiences of 'failure' into public statements and interrupt smooth narratives of consistent academic 'success'. However, we need to ask who can afford to make such public statements and how 'failure' carries and sticks differently according to both professional and social status. According to Gill and Donaghue (2016: 91), such public sharing can 'remain locked into a profoundly individualistic framework that turns away from systemic or collective politics to offer instead a set of individualized tools by which to "cope" with the strains of the neoliberal academy'. I want to suggest that we cannot understand feelings of imposterism as an individual problem or private issue, isolated from the social contexts in which they are felt.

Some studies of 'imposter syndrome' confirm that, for instance, 'self-assurance about personal competence correlated positively with better teaching evaluations' (Brems et al. 1994: 183), suggesting an important relationship between how workers feel and the efficacy of their labor. However, more recent and more critical work has asked how imposter syndrome is distributed in universities, and whether it is more common among minorities, and those not marked as 'elite': 'nontraditional' students and staff, including women, queer academics, Black academics, academics of color, academics with a disability, first generations, working class academics, and academics with caring responsibilities. Petee et al. (2014) found that in the USA, African American students were more likely to experience imposter syndrome than their White peers. Also in

the USA, Collett and Avelis' (2013) quantitative analysis found that self-reported imposter syndrome had more relevance than the commonly given 'explanation' of the perceived 'family friendliness' of doctoral programs for explaining women graduates' 'downshifting' from tenure track programs to non-tenure track teaching positions. 'Imposter syndrome' is something more, something other, than a private problem.

Inequalities in UK higher education (HE), according to major dimensions of socioeconomic stratification, are well documented among students (Abrahams and Ingram 2013; Allen et al. 2012; Bathmaker et al. 2016; Ingram and Waller 2015; Leathwood 2004; Reay et al. 2009, 2010; Waller et al. 2017) and academic staff (Addison 2012; Ahmed 2012; Halsey 1992; Leathwood and Read 2013). The casualization of academic labor entrenches patterns of staff stratification, which impact differently according to intersectional inequalities (Leathwood and Read 2013). It is clear that higher education is characterized by 'inequality regimes... that result in and maintain class, gender, and race inequalities' (Acker 2006: 443, cited in Gill and Donaghue 2016: 94). Moreover, research documents the racialized and gendered structure of disciplines, curricula, knowledge production, and universities themselves (Andrews 2015; Bhambra 2014; Bhambra and Santos 2017; Stanley and Wise 1993). Puwar (2004: 1) demonstrates how institutional spaces of work were never 'neutral' but rather the 'arrival of women and racialised minorities in spaces from which they have been historically or conceptually excluded... sheds light on how spaces have been formed through what has been constructed out'. Puwar (2004) goes on to show how the 'arrival' of those previously excluded exposes how institutions are marked by masculinity and whiteness, which negates the 'undisputed' right of women and racialized minorities to occupy that space.

Concurrently, 'diversity' is increasingly mainstreamed in HEI policy and governance. 'Diversity' is figured as a desirable characteristic in the neoliberal, 'entrepreneurial' university (Taylor 2013, 2014). 'Diverse' subjectivities, embodied personhoods marked by 'difference' according to class, gender, race and ethnicity, as well as sexuality and disability, can be made visible in the service of a marketable institutional commitment to inclusivity (Taylor 2013). 'Diversity' is measured, in initiatives such as Athena SWAN, and becomes a metric of institutional differentiation.

Here, student and staff identities and personal stories become evidence, promotional material, for the commodified 'happy diversity' of the institution (Ahmed 2012). While the 'language of diversity' becomes a 'holy mantra' (Puwar 2004: 1), there is a significant gap between symbolic institutional commitments to 'diversity' and meaningful change. Ahmed (2012) argues therefore that institutional commitments to 'diversity' can be understood as 'non-performatives', in the sense that such commitments do not bring about the 'diversity' they name; the institutionalization of 'diversity' can paradoxically work to obscure institutional whiteness, racism, and sexism. HEIs are complicit in maintaining racialized borders, as with the Prevent agenda in HE, and monitor the visa and immigration status of (some) staff and students. It is in this context that staff and students mobilize to decolonize curricular and canons and to challenge institutional racism (Andrews 2015; Bhabra and Santos 2017).

In this troubling context, researchers have attended to working class student experiences in predominantly middle-class UK HEIs. Reay et al. (2010: 121) emphasize 'that the small number of working-class students attaining places at elite universities face... considerable identity work, and the discomforts generated when habitus confronts a starkly unfamiliar field'. In the USA, Granfield's (1991) fieldwork with working class students at a prestigious Ivy League school uncovered themes of feeling out of place and fitting in by attempts at 'faking it', adopting middle- and upper-class styles of speech and dress perceived as necessary to success. Abrahams and Ingram (2013) have documented the 'chameleon habitus' as a resource for local working class students negotiating contradictory fields of the university and living at home.

Research that explores the affective aspects of 'nontraditional' students and workers 'fitting in' to universities is particularly relevant, as are accounts of how 'being diverse' in HE 'can be personally painful' (Taylor 2013: 53). Loveday (2016: 1140), argues that shame structures working class experiences in English HEIs and contributes to 'the embodiment of deficiency' among working class students and staff, This demonstrates the appropriateness of the concept of 'affective practice' (Wetherell 2012), as a way to shift away from speaking of emotions, which tend to carry individualizing connotations as 'properties of the person' towards

recognizing that being affected is ‘the result of a social practice’ (Loveday 2016: 1143), building on Skeggs’ (1997, 2004) on class and gender as ‘structures of feeling’, as well as the work of affect scholars such as Sedgwick (2003).

Participation in universities is far from a guarantor of legitimacy, and ‘the negative affects circulating in HE institutions have the capacity to attach themselves to particular bodies more easily than others’ (Loveday 2016: 1142, and see Taylor 2013 on the ‘stickiness’ of markers of ‘diversity’, and Ahmed 2009 on ‘embodying diversity’), Loveday asks—with regard to shame—‘how is it that a problem of society can so easily be turned into a deficiency of the self?’ (2016: 1143). Re-thinking ‘imposter syndrome’ as a public feeling likewise thinks through how a supposed ‘deficiency of the self’ can be refigured as a ‘problem of society’. Doing so is aided by ‘relatively scarce’ but growing studies of academics as workers that coalesce around themes of precariousness, casualization, and audit culture (Gill and Donaghue 2016: 92).

Imposter Syndrome as a ‘Diagnostic of Power’

There is established precedent in the (feminist) sociology of emotions for troubling any easy distinction between ‘public’ worlds of work and ‘private’ emotional life (Hochschild 1983) and for approaching feeling and affect as something like a ‘diagnostic of power’ (Abu-Lughod 1990). The second aspect of imposter syndrome as a public feeling follows these precedents and asks what feeling like an imposter can tell us about shifts in the structure and governance of higher education institutions, which are increasingly characterized by endemic marketization, the rise of entrepreneurialism (Taylor 2014), associated casualization and audit cultures, and how these trends shape feminist academic work and the ‘mood’ of feminist academia (Pereira 2012, 2016, 2017b). Three aspects—precariousness, audit cultures, and trends towards self-promotion—are particularly relevant for thinking through imposter syndrome as a public feeling.

The growing body of work that explores ‘new laboring subjectivities’ (Gill 2014: 12), the ‘psychic life of neoliberalism’ (Donaghue et al. 2014),

does encompass feelings of imposterism. Sparkes (2007: 525) narrates ‘the fear of being found out’ in relation to working class insecurities that abound in predominantly middle-class universities. Gill (2010: 1) quotes an academic dealing with a recent journal rejection, ‘And you know the worst thing is, they are right: I am useless... I’m a complete fraud, and I should have realized that I was going to be found out if I sent my work to a top journal like that’. Gill (2010: 2) emphasizes that ‘feelings of out-of-placeness, fraudulence and fear of exposure in the contemporary academy... [are] ordinary and everyday, yet at the same time remain largely secret and silenced in the public spaces of the academy’. “Knights and Clarke (2014: 335) analyzed how ‘fragile and insecure academic selves’ are produced by managerialist controls.

In increasingly entrepreneurial HEIs, ‘being and becoming’ and especially ‘arriving’ as an academic can feel stretched, and even permanently deferred (Taylor 2014), as everyday ‘work goals’ become an ‘ever-receding horizon that cannot be reached’ (Pereira 2016: 106), as ‘neoliberal academia is producing new forms of insecurity... [that] push us to work harder, sell ourselves better, and engage in competition rather than collaboration’ (Gill and Donaghue 2016: 93). Here workers encounter imperatives to enact a particular kind of enterprising academic self, and the promise that if they ‘produce more, publish more, conference more, achieve more, in short “perform more” [then they] will eventually get “there”’ (Hey 2001: 80, cited in Pereira 2016: 105). In such a context, academic work can feel akin to what Berlant (2011) describes in *Cruel Optimism* as desiring an object that is an obstacle to one’s own flourishing.

At the same time managerialist ‘technologies of audit’ (Sparkes 2007: 527) proliferate, including (in the UK) participation in the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF),² the National Student Survey, internal teaching evaluations, performance enhancement reviews, citation indices, impact factors, and so on. Burrows (2012) shows how UK academics can be ranked on over 100 indices, contributing to feeling ‘always monitored and assessed’ (Pereira 2016: 106). Sparkes (2007: 527) argues that technologies of audit have an autobiographical character, in which academics are called to ‘account

for the self'. Such metrics are made to 'stand in for... the worth, quality, or value of an individual' (Ball 2003, cited in Pereira 2016: 104), as Sparkes (2007: 530) demonstrates how quickly and easily *my research isn't good enough* slides into *I'm not good enough*.

This paves the way for the affects of precarity and audit cultures, 'chronic stress, anxiety, exhaustion...' (Gill and Donaghue 2016: 91), to be figured as 'privatized anxieties that are understood to reflect on the value and worth of the individual' (Gill 2010: 10); 'part of a psychic landscape in which not being successful is misrecognized.... in terms of individual (moral) failure' (Gill 2010: 12), leading in turn to feelings of guilt, shame, and self-blame, rather than anger at the institutionalized drivers and structural determinants of audit cultures and precarity (Gill 2014: 22). Audit culture, and the monitoring and measurement therein, has 'been almost perfectly internalized' (Gill 2010: 7; and see Pereira 2016: 105) by academic workers, who increasingly routinely engage in 'diverse self promotion activities' (Gill 2014: 15), as part of their workload, including updating multiple profiles and online CVs, tweeting, and blogging, consistent with the 'compulsory individuality' (Cronin 2000, cited in Gill 2010: 4) of neoliberalism, whereby individuals are 'required to tell the stories of their own lives'.

Resultantly, the 'hidden injuries of the neoliberal university' (Gill 2010), which do affect most academic workers, just as they are marked by intersecting injustices, are nevertheless, individualized. Pereira (2016: 105) has documented 'working harder, sleeping less' as 'popular' responses to precarity, audit cultures, and the requirement for entrepreneurial self-promotion and argues that 'the lens of personal adaptation... reproduces neoliberal modes of governmentality that frame structural problems as matters... that can best be solved by self-regulation' (Pereira 2016: 106). Likewise, Gill and Donaghue (2016: 92) identify 'technologies of the self' (including wellness initiatives, stress management techniques, resilience training, productivity tips, and time management apps), which 'call forth an enterprising, self managed and "responsibilised" subject... whilst leaving the power relations and structural contradictions of the neoliberal university untouched'. In these individualized and individualizing responses, the problems of precarity and audit are 'simultaneously

acknowledged... yet silenced and exorcised from formal spaces of the contemporary academy' (Gill and Donaghue 2016: 91).

The limits of 'individual solutions to a structural problem' (Pereira 2016: 105) are quite clear, as is the importance of '[resisting] this tendency to individualization' (ibid.: 106). In this vein Pereira (2016: 107) cautions against underestimating 'the power of academic "small talk"', although easily dismissed and denigrated as both 'self-centered whining... [and] as a potentially risky exposure of one's own weaknesses', since 'talking about it... can have profoundly transformative effects' (ibid.). The relationship between 'talking about it' as a tactic to resist the 'hidden injuries' (Gill 2010) of neoliberal HE governance and the facet of this same governance that 'requires individuals to tell the stories of their own lives' (Gill 2010: 4) via the proliferation of audits and metrics but also through self-promotional blogs and social media activities, is difficult to untangle. Gill (2014: 24) highlights ambivalent complicity; academics are 'critical of yet trapped within the same logic of individual solutions' (Gill 2010: 9). The power of 'talking about it' and the ambivalence of being 'within and against' the neoliberal university are key aspects of understanding 'imposter syndrome' as public feeling and re-thinking feeling like an imposter as a resource for action and as a site of agency.

Imposter Syndrome as a Resource for Action and a Site of Agency

De-pathologizing and de-stigmatizing negative affects are central aspects of Cvetkovich's (2012) public feelings project. Cvetkovich reconceptualized aspects of depression, including inertia, despair, apathy, and indifference, as resources for political action and therefore as sites of agency. What happens if we think of imposter syndrome, not as an individual problem of faulty self-esteem to be managed or overcome but instead as a resource for doing feminist teaching and research? I want to suggest that we can think of imposter syndrome like this in relation to a central ambivalence of feeling academic and doing feminist work in the neoliberal university, and that one way in which this ambivalence can be understood is in feminist epistemologies and knowledge claims.

Academic feminist knowledge production encounters the explicit epistemological problem of how to make convincing, valid knowledge claims while shifting the definition of ‘valid knowledge’. Feminist knowledge production, for instance, in social science, is usually critical of dominant epistemological paradigms, at the same time as orientating towards them in some way. This aspect of feminist intellectual labor can be found in methodological textbooks (see, for instance, Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002: 15–16), and in feminist epistemologies which are critical of androcentricity in ‘objective’ social science, while at the same time seeking to generate some kind of truth about the gendered realities of the social world.

This tension can be traced through the emergence of the epistemological stance that women’s embodied experiences of the everyday could form the primary basis for sociological knowledge (Smith 1990: 21–22) and the development of women’s standpoint theory (Smith 1974), feminist standpoint theory (Harding 1997; Hartstock 1997; Hekman 1997), and Black feminist thought (Hill Collins 2009, and see Bhambra 2015). Black feminist thought in particular ‘addresses on-going epistemological debates concerning the power dynamics that underlie what counts as knowledge’ (Hill Collins 2009: 292) and makes it clear that ‘feminist knowledge’ and ‘women’s experience’ have never been innocent, homogeneous, or unmarked by oppressive (raced, classed) power relations.

In the context of sociopolitical structures that position women and racialized minorities as ‘unknowing’ and ‘less credible’ (Pereira 2016: 101), feminist academic work is an activist, political project, a ‘critical intervention in the academy’, and feminist academics ‘seek not just to generate more knowledge but also... to question and transform existing modes, frameworks, and institutions of knowledge production’ (Pereira 2012: 283). Pereira (2012) finds that these aspects are often ‘bypassed or rejected’ by nonfeminist academics, and Taylor (2013: 51) shows how critical pedagogy can be ‘read as a failure, mobilized by the angry, emotional feminist academic, rather than her “neutral” “objective” “rational” un-emotional counterpart’. Feminist scholarship can be ‘marked as not quite “proper” academic knowledge’ (Pereira 2016: 101), perceived as incompatible with ‘the production of rigorous and credible academic knowledge’ (ibid.: 102), and feminist academics can themselves be dismissed as “imposter[s] in a

university dedicated to the neutral, balanced pursuit of disinterested scholarship” (Boxer 1998: 161, cited in Pereira 2016: 01).

Because of the ambivalent institutional position that feminist academics can occupy, where making feminist knowledge claims requires mediating between epistemological critiques as well as the requirement for some degree of legibility within dominant epistemological paradigms, and to nonfeminist colleagues, institutions, and audits, ‘the paradoxical precondition for dissent is participation’ (Hark 2016: 84). For Hark, ‘if critique and regulation are tied up in a fraught but intimate connection, then the point will be to reflect critically upon those circumstances and conditions under which we produce, distribute and consume knowledge’ (ibid.). This chapter now moves on to explore the affective landscape of being ‘within and against’ the neoliberal university, as a feminist early career academic, asking how imposter syndrome can be thought of as a resource in this thorny, and often felt as paralyzing, context. I wrote the following semi-fictionalized auto-ethnography, drawing on my own experience, as one attempt at responding to this question.

Feeling (too) Academic/(not) Academic (Enough)

The story that follows is partial and hesitant and is an attempt to do, or make, rather than (or as well as) develop a critique, and this follows Sparkes (2007: 521) on presenting a ‘story that asks for [your] consideration’, Inckle (2010) on ‘telling takes to speak embodied truth’, and Cvetkovich (2012) on academic work as creative practice and her suggestion that ‘writing personal narrative encourages the hunches, intuitions, and feelings that intellectual analysis can restrict’ (2012: 80–81). I’ve tried to focus on difficult and ambivalent feelings, blockages, and inertia, but at the level of the mundane, everyday banal emotional turbulence that for me characterizes a significant portion of the affective landscape of doing (early career) feminist academic work.

I’m returning to my desk, the scene of what feels like my first ‘proper’ academic job—I’ve got this desk, a salary, a staff card, an institutional

affiliation, for the duration of a fractional six-month contract. I've just finished a lecture, about 'collaborative' research methods, followed by a seminar, in which students' discussion kept coming back to the need for 'objective', and 'unbiased' data. I can't help but feel as though I let the students down; the lecture wasn't good enough at framing questions of power in research relationships or at making feminist arguments about activist research practice as accessible as they could have been. I slump down the corridors, and try not to feel too disheartened, reminding myself of how many students wrote excellent essays on feminist methodology last semester.

My mind wanders through years of essays marked. This is the first time that 'lecturer' is my job title, but I've been lecturing—and working as a seminar tutor—for about six years, mostly on zero hours and very temporary contracts. One memory stands out, from a few years ago, working as a tutor on another research methods course at another university, when students were tasked with writing reflexive essays on their group research projects. One student wrote a detailed, nuanced, and original account of the gendered and racialized power dynamics of their group project. The essay was excellent, demonstrating exactly the kind of analytical understanding of the logics of research practice that the module asked for and developing a sophisticated critique of how race and gender inflected the group's research design. I graded this essay as a 95, which after some back and forth (moderators weren't sure if the essay met the full requirements of the assessment and wondered if it was 'too personal', and 'not academic enough', and should be graded much lower) was eventually moderated down to 90. This simultaneously feels like nothing to do with me (it was the student who wrote a brilliant essay after all!) and like a victory of sorts.

Stuck in the crush of students pouring out of classrooms, I dig my phone out and start thumbing through work emails; a reminder of an upcoming deadline for a journal manuscript review (I've been putting it off because I *still* feel uncomfortable with and under qualified for the gatekeeping aspects of peer review); weekly notifications of sociology job vacancies (I'll browse through them tonight); weekly notifications of non-academic job vacancies (I'll look briefly at them and feel unqualified later tonight); and a student, one of my first year personal tutees needs to arrange a meeting, she failed an essay and thinks that perhaps university

isn't for her after all, she's 'just not cut out for it'. I need to find a way to help her reframe this 'failure', as a hurdle that can be overcome rather than an irrevocable judgment of her abilities. I would feel insincere telling her that the university was 'for her'; the university clearly isn't 'for' working class mature students with extensive caring responsibilities. I'll probably just end up referring her to a retention program and helping her with Harvard-style referencing, with 'constructing a logical paragraph and essay structure', framing the problem *again* in terms of skills she needs to learn, of a deficit on her part.

Another email jumps out; an article I revised and resubmitted about three months ago, to a mainstream sociology journal, has been accepted—after many revisions—finally accepted. I squint at my phone, shoulders tense, head down, forehead frowning. The screen is small, the text is tiny, my eyes tired from late nights and early mornings, brain caffeine added. Doubt sets in *I must be reading it wrong, this is just wishful thinking*. At first glance the email seems too good to be true. Back at my desk, I turn on my computer and check, the article has indeed been accepted.

A flush of validation, perhaps it was only a matter of time and persistence, just like everyone always says. And relief, that's one less thing to worry about, I grab a sharpie and cross this item from the ever-long to-do list tacked on the wall. I almost feel like celebrating, except I have to work on that funding bid tonight, it's due for internal review by the end of the week. I've never worked on a bid this big before, and I don't want to mess it up.

Jubilant gives way to mundane concerns, I'll have to update my CV... Surely this will help build the case for my contract to be extended, renewed, perhaps even made permanent... I remember the well-meaning advice from an ex-colleague when I got this position; 'Well, think of your first three months as an extended job interview', maybe I'm not doing too badly in this 12-week-long interview... Maybe I am successfully 'managing my academic self in the neoliberal university' (Holmwood 2015). Maybe I am really REF-ready after all... I'll have to double check this article is REF-able—and if the university even plans to make a sociology submission... Should I tweet about this? How does open access even really work? I force myself to log in to Twitter, swallow down the discomfort of self-promotion, add an entry to my online profile.

Printing a pile of module evaluation forms for students to fill in, I bump into a colleague and whisper the news about the article's acceptance, and get a hug in return. A sense of achievement—and generous congratulations from colleagues—feel authentic. But there's something else too. Back at my desk, replying to as many emails as I can and shoving a sandwich into my mouth as fast as I can before the next class, the anxious monologue kicks in.

Oh shit. Now this is going to be published, there is a chance that people will actually read it. Well, maybe read the abstract at least. Real sociologists are going to read my work and realize just how inept it really is. How did this article get through peer review? The reviewers must have been too rushed, or the journal must be so desperate for articles that they've lowered their standards enough to let my article, to let me, slip in. There is no way that it could have been accepted on merit alone. Now the real scrutiny is going to start, and the core of my inadequacy—not really an academic, not really a sociologist—will be exposed.

I try and derail this train of thought. This is classic imposter syndrome, groundless, everyone has these feelings. Remember what your supervisor always said, just fake it 'til you make it. Anyway, time for teaching.

Later that evening, I'm sat on the long rush-hour bus home. The bus is crowded but I have a seat, and a copy of the 'impact strategy' for the bid I'm working on. I lean my head against the damp window and start editing with a blunt pencil. As the bus lurches from stop to stop again, I wonder, how did that manuscript ever get accepted? The reviewers' comments required that the paper needed to 'demonstrate a more substantive contribution to the discipline'. The reviewers didn't ask that I 'take the feminism out', but 'working up' the sociological relevance did come at some expense to the feminist analysis. I think of all the times I've edited my CV, and how 'feminist methodology' and 'gender and queer theory' move up and down the list of research interests depending on the role and institution to which I'm applying.

I close my eyes and imagine my feminist academic heroes, cringing as I do. I bet they never compromised their politics for publications. I try and tell myself that I didn't change the content, just the 'framing', this rings hollow. I wrote that paper in part because I needed a publication. The rationale was to get something in a reasonably ranked journal before

the end of my contract, in time for the next round of job applications. I'm scared that I'm not employable unless I'm REF-able. Whatever that even means.

Home at last, I dump the impact statement on the kitchen table and get to work editing. I update my 'list of selected publications' for the bid, although there's nothing selective about this list, I'm including everything I've ever remotely published, including a book review and working paper. I realize the list now just about fills a whole page, even without relying on rather generous line spacing like usual. Maybe this was the point of working so hard to get that article accepted, so that I could make a longer list. No wonder I'm convinced the paper isn't good enough, no wonder I don't feel like a 'real' academic, if all I was doing was playing the game, following the rules in order to get the article accepted, an instrumental exercise in pursuit of a microscopic increase in the chance of getting funding, getting a job. Absentmindedly copying and pasting my employment history onto the online form, I think about how a lot of funding bodies require that the applicant be on a contract that will last the duration of the proposed research project, and I'm not on a contract like that. No wonder I feel like I don't belong, with only a temporary and partial status.

I don't think that a longer list of publications makes me a better candidate. It might mean that a selection committee pauses slightly longer over my application instead of discarding it in the first round, but other than that? I don't think that publication metrics indicate the value of research or the value of me as a candidate. I don't believe in the stamps of legitimacy, or eligibility indicators, or person specification criteria, that I am pursuing. Nevertheless, I make a note to actually look up the official difference between a 'three-star' and a 'four-star' publication in the REF, and to actually calculate my citation index ranking. I don't really know how to assess the value of my own work in a way that doesn't orientate to these criteria. If you're not convinced by, and are critical of, prevailing measures of 'good' work, how do you know if your work is any good? Okay, so focus. If I'm successful at this bid then *maybe* I'll get to do research and publish papers that aren't exercises in performing my own entitlement to the profession?

It's hard to concentrate. Trying to gather lessons learnt from three years of postdoc application forms and interviews. Things are getting better I

think. I get more interviews now. I know successful academics that I admire and trust, and they seem to want to work with me. I benefit in innumerable—often invisible ways—from networks of support, friends, family, colleagues, and from the tireless (emotional) labor of (feminist) mentors. From my whiteness. My middle-class South of England accent. I went to an elite university. My face fits. Now I feel guilty, other people have it much worse, what's wrong with me. I'm lucky to have work, I just need to hang in there, push it just a little bit further, stability and security must be just around the corner.

Time to take a break for some dinner and a monthly Skype with friends from the PhD. These friendships overlap with a feminist reading group we started during that time. Sorting out the inevitable sound/video glitches that characterize the start of every call, I think about how three out of the seven of us work in universities now. Others work in government, development, and advocacy alongside maintaining academic collaborations. Last time we spoke about feeling a sense of alienation in academia; hardly any of us, including those who work in universities, felt that we belonged there. I reminisce about a feminist conference we organized together, years ago. I remember a comment from an ex-colleague shortly after the conference. *Did you enjoy your basket weaving last week?* I hadn't understood what he meant at first, not until I told the others did I realize it was disparaging. Art installations, film, and zine-making had been part of the conference. After the conference the school office emailed our reading group, asking if we wanted to help put up Christmas decorations in the building foyer. We said no and laughed about it, but wondered why we had been approached, were any other reading and research groups asked the same, and what was it about us that gave the impression we were available for arranging tinsel and hanging baubles from the strip-lit ceiling.

Discussion

In writing this chapter I considered presenting the above story without discussion, asking instead 'simply... for your consideration' (Sparkes 2007: 521). In the writing of it however, there seemed to be a couple of points worth making. Firstly, and to reiterate, I think 'imposter syndrome' appears as much more of a *public* feeling when we think about it

in relation to not only how feminist epistemologies (often but not always) seek to challenge conventional ways of knowing but also how feminist academics (often but not always) seek to avoid or interrupt the reproduction of neoliberal governance in the details of their academic labor, administration, teaching, and research practice. Both these projects are compromised by ‘our’ complicity and implication in neoliberal HEIs, by the need for recognition and legibility within (some of the) dominant definitions of what ‘proper knowledge’ and ‘proper work’ look like, and by misrecognition by colleagues, students, and academic institutions.

I wonder if this complicity and implication is an important aspect of ‘imposter syndrome’ as a potential resource for playing the game of neoliberal academic labor while trying to change the rules. I think this speaks to what Sedgwick has called ‘the middle ranges of agency’ (2003: 13) between polarized dichotomies of voluntarism and determinism. I’ve previously tried to show how the imperative to *be taken seriously* in research and teaching work ‘is precisely what compels people to follow the tried and true paths of knowledge production’ (Halberstam 2011: 6), and that a willingness to not be taken seriously can be a resource for social change in institutions (Breeze 2015). The Res-Sisters collective of early career feminist sociologists state, ‘we are part of the game, but we don’t want to play by the rules’ (2016a, and see 2016b). Sparkes describes a sense of complicity and having ‘played a game that he did not believe in’ (2007: 528). High-profile social theorists have examined similar dynamics—and used a similar metaphor—for example, in capitalist labor processes (Burawoy 1979), arguing that:

The very activity of playing a game generates consent with respect to its rules... one cannot both play the game and at the same time question the rules. (Burawoy 1979: 81)

Once a game is established however, it can assume a dynamics of its own... there is no guarantee that it will continue to reproduce the conditions of its existence... it is possible that playing the game will tend to undermine the rules that define it. (Burawoy 1979: 86)

Part of the ‘game’ of neoliberal academic work is being called to perform (in job applications, interviews, funding bids, lectures, staff meetings, student supervision meeting, conference presentations, etc.) high levels of confidence, competence, and even entitlement that are not necessarily or always *felt* in a singular, straightforward, or unequivocal way. I wonder if academics often perform professional confidence to a degree that is not necessarily convincing to the self that is doing the performance.

Individualist myths of meritocracy rely on the contention that those in positions of authority and responsibility have *earned* it somehow, that their position is an authentic reflection of their individual skills and hard work. I wonder if this ideological linking of professional status to individual talents is conducive to feminist academic imposter syndrome, since it is well known that hierarchical status differences are very much not simply or exclusively ‘earned’ but rather distributed according to particular intersections of social inequality and privilege. Alternative mechanisms for distributing positions of responsibility—for instance, via community accountability—may offer an opportunity to intervene in ‘imposter syndrome’. Collective and community accountability—in the place of managerialist cultures and technologies of audit—would also pose a substantive challenge to contemporary forms of HE governance. The Res-Sisters (2016a, b) emphasize collectivity and solidarity as strategies for disrupting neoliberalism in and beyond the university. As Pereira argues feminist projects of ‘articulating activism and academic work... [are] extremely difficult... but we must reject conceptualizing that difficulty as an individual challenge, and reframe it as a structural problem requiring—urgently—collective responses’ (2016: 101).

As the rationale for this collection makes clear, connecting private-public sentiments is a substantive element of feminist knowledge production, and inhabiting the neoliberal university involves complex feminist feelings of being *in and out* of place. I would emphasize that the ambivalence of simultaneously inhabiting—and seeking legitimacy and recognition within—the neoliberal university while trying to resist and rework these forms of educational governance and practice, *and* shift the definitions of ‘legitimate’ knowledge and ‘good’ teaching and research, is one (potentially significant) source of feelings of imposterism for feminist academics. If your feminism means that you are critical and skeptical of

established measures of the value of academic work and markers of success, and if your feminism means that you do not necessarily or only aim to succeed within established definitions of what an academic career looks like, feeling like an imposter might be no bad thing.

If this is the case, then embracing ‘imposter syndrome’ might offer one avenue for negotiating the ambivalence of being ‘within and against’, of trying to play the game *and* change the rules of the neoliberal university, and serve as a location of collective feminist action in higher education. In this spirit, I began to make a list of what ‘excellent’ feminist research and ‘excellent’ feminist teaching might look like, criteria for recognizing feminist academic ‘success’. I stopped short however, because I couldn’t quite work out a way to do this without making another measuring stick to beat and berate with, another list of aspirations that feel—and often are—impossible to live up to. I want to suggest instead then, that one alternative (and partial, incomplete, problematic) feminist version of ‘academic success’ might look like failing to meet (some of the) established—and patriarchal, colonial, classed—definitions of academic excellence. Failing (inevitably) to live up to standards that are impossible to meet (Pereira 2017a), and doing so strategically, collectively, and publicly, offers one way of critiquing, and rejecting, institutional conditions of competitive audit cultures and compulsory self-promotion. Public feminist debate on how good, ‘successful’ academic work is not necessarily or entirely defined by metrics of impact factor, citation indices, four-star publications, even by the award of funding or a permanent contract, draws attention to the contingency, specificity, and political character of these ‘indicators’. I think these kinds of deliberate failures—especially if collective—might also expose how feeling like a (feminist) imposter is in part generated by being measured according to criteria that your politics and epistemology may well (although not necessarily) critique and negate.

Conclusion

Thinking through ‘imposter syndrome’ as a public feeling shows how a felt-as inauthentic, fraudulent, and inadequate relationship to established measures of ‘success’ and indicators of belonging can be refigured as a

critique of these standards, rather than as a deficiency of the self. As this collection set out to explore, feminist academic praxis can hold out the promise of fighting—and perhaps feeling from—the neoliberal university. In this chapter I've tried to develop my interest in the spaces in between fighting and fleeing, and how the complicity and implication of working in UK HEIs involves reproducing, as well as unsettling, the neoliberal university. Feeling academic *and* feminist in neoliberal universities can be understood not only as a flight or a fight, and not exactly as a failure either; but rather the ambivalence of being complicit can manifest as a sort of freeze—a sensation of paralyzing stuck-ness—a feeling of not knowing how to inhabit academia or how to do 'good' work if you're critical of established criteria for recognizing 'excellence'. Drawing again on Cvetkovich (2012: 202), the 'willingness to encounter... lack of knowledge... [and] being stuck can be an invitation to that which we don't yet know'; here 'not knowing' can be a necessarily precondition to finding out and to elucidating the connections and overlaps between (failing to) fit in and fighting the neoliberal university.

The suggestion of deliberately failing to meet the performative, disciplinary, and impossible standards of the neoliberal university requires a critical consideration of who can afford to 'fail' in this way, and how. Perhaps such strategies will prove slightly less risky for feminist academics on permanent contracts and for those at 'elite' institutions. Conversely, feminist academics on precarious and casualized contracts and those at teaching-focused or post-1992 institutions might (to a limited extent) be able to 'fly under the radar' of audits and surveillance. White and middle-class feminist academics' failures are very likely less risky to their own status and career progression, as the work of being a 'challenging presence' (Murray 2018—this volume) is unfairly and disproportionately carried by Black feminists and racialized minorities. Whose—and which—'failures' threaten their job and financial security, and whose can be paradoxically recaptured to evidence rewardable critical reflexivity? These caveats to a naïve call to simply 'fail better', and the critical question of *whose* failures are most commonly and powerfully inscribed as individual inadequacy and deficiency of the self, underscore the importance of *collective* feminist organizing around failure across intersectional solidarities.

Finally then, I want to finish this chapter with a brief reflection on how—of course—I felt like an imposter writing it. Even this exercise in ‘talking about it’, and giving an account of quite intimate feelings, is plagued by the conviction of inauthenticity and fraudulence. *I’ve got a job, I’ve published a book, I’ve won a prize, no one will ever believe that I feel like such an imposter.* Given such an ad infinitum layering of ‘imposter syndrome’, responses recommending ‘getting over it’ start to look very appealing! I think there’s more here though, about how being able to admit and talk about feelings of imposterism indicates a substantial degree of privilege and can be mobilized as a performance of modesty, humility, and knowing self-depreciation. When I started writing this chapter, I was on a six-month, part-time contract; by the time it is published I’ll be in a five-year, research-focused, full-time post. My position in relation to the neoliberal university is changing, and it is time to think more about what to do with this, how to use it.

Acknowledgments Feeling like an imposter has often involved the poisonous suspicion that the generous support, encouragement, and mentorship of colleagues and friends must come from a place of pity, *people are helping me because they feel so sorry for me and can clearly see how hopeless I am!* I say poisonous because this does a toxic disservice to the generosity, work, and emotional labor that has absolutely made it possible for me to carry on working in academia. So many thanks to Yvette Taylor and Kinneret Lahad for editing this collection and for all your encouragement and mentorship besides. Thanks to the University of Edinburgh Sociology 2016 New Directions conference for the chance to present—and very helpfully discuss—nascent ideas on this topic, and in particular to Karen Gregory for insightful comments. Similar thanks to the Queen Margaret University Public Sociology Seminar Series for extremely helpful discussion of this paper, particularly to Eurig Scandrett for insights in relation to meritocracy and accountability, and with the Centre for Applied Social Science for funds to present this work at the 2017 British Sociological Association conference. Thanks to Maria do Mar Pereira for really incisive and generous discussion at this event. Endless thanks to Darcy, Hilary, Vic, Jo, Kathleen, Órla, and Lena for existing and talking with me about these, and many other, challenges in feminist academic work.

Notes

1. I've used quotation marks—scare quotes—around ‘imposter’ syndrome in most of this text. I think that conceptualizing the feelings associated with imposterism as a syndrome carries precisely the individualizing and pathologizing connotations that public feelings seek to trouble and undo. However, I've used this term throughout the chapter, alongside attempts to unsettle and dislodge the implication that feeling like an imposter is an individual—or private—problem.
2. The Research Excellence Framework is a joint undertaking of the UK government Department for Employment and Learning and the higher education funding councils of England, Wales, and Scotland. The REF describes itself as ‘the new system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions’; the first set of results were published in 2014, ranking research ‘outputs’, ‘impacts’, and ‘environment’ on a one-to four-star rating system (see REF 2014). The Teaching Excellence Framework, recently introduced by the UK government, ‘aims to recognize and reward excellent learning and teaching’ and is being implemented in England via the Higher Education Funding Council for England (see TEF 2017).

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Gender, Time, and ‘Waiting’ in Everyday Academic Life

Barbara Read and Lisa Bradley

The increasing dominance of accountability measures and ‘audit culture’ in higher education has been well documented in the literature (see, e.g., Slaughter and Leslie 1997; Henkel 1999; Harley 2001; Morley 2003; Lynch 2006)—and there are an increasing number of studies noting the detrimental effects of the pressures of the ‘audit culture’ and ‘top-down’ managerialist practices on academic life and work (Henkel 1997; Harley and Lowe 1998; Hey 2004; David 2008; Leathwood and Read 2013). Within and alongside these discussions are those pointing to the continued pleasures of academia as a profession, with, for example, Gornall and Salisbury stating that ‘there are not many professional jobs you can do in your dressing gown’ (2012: 151, see also Vostal 2015). The disruption of notional temporal and spatial boundaries of home and work in this particular image of the academic in their dressing gown highlights some of the complexities of discussing our felt experiences of ‘academia’ and ‘academic work’. For example, who is defined as an academic and what is defined as academic work are fluid subjective concepts and not necessar-

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ily bound to the limits of paid employment at an institution of higher education. Of course, like all professions there are many ways of experiencing academia and academic life, related both to social positionings—for example, in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, age—and also to material positionings, for example, the ‘reality’ of occupational and contract status and wider caring/family responsibilities. In embarking on our contribution to this volume, we were keen to explore the ways in which both the similarities and differences of identity, contractual status, life commitments, and experience infuse the ways in which we ‘feel’ academic life and work.

Noting the importance of a focus on the temporal in the analysis of social life, we were keen to organize our analysis of this topic through a temporal lens. It struck us that while much of our working lives seemed incessantly fast-paced, it was often, and intuitively contradictorily, characterized by multiple and overlapping episodes of stillness and ‘waiting’. We thus decided to reflect in this chapter on the complex ways in which such positionings shape our experiences of ‘waiting’ and the ways in particular conceptions of ‘time’ and the ‘temporal’ influence the ways in which we feel and perform the ‘academic’ in our everyday working lives. In doing so we will be using experimental autoethnographies (Bradley 2015) to explore our own experiences of waiting in our ‘academic’ lives over the course of a single week. The methods we will be using will be the photographing of images over a course of a week which will be intended to construct ‘talking points’ relating to our experiences of waiting, which we will then discuss with each other in a ‘co-interview’, loosely structured around the images.

Waiting as a Social Construction

Analyzing the concept of ‘waiting’ involves, necessarily, an interrogation of the social construction of time itself and a consideration of the ways in which dominant sociocultural constructions of conceptualizing and regulating time pervade our everyday lives (Leach 1971; Zeruvabel 1981; Elias 1993; Lahad 2012). As Adam (the founder of the interdisciplinary

journal *Time & Society*) notes, the study of the social dynamics of time is still under-researched in academia:

Much like people in their everyday lives, social scientists take time largely for granted. Time is such an obvious factor in social science that it is almost invisible. To 'see' it and to recognise it in not just its dominant but also its less visible forms has proved to be hard work. (Adam 1990: 3)

Lisa has written elsewhere (Bradley 2015) about how time is a political construction, and that we must look at the ways in which such temporal political constructions inevitably shape the construction of whole *ways of life* (see Bourdieu 2000). Life in the modern West is infused with the hegemonic discourse of 'clock time' as an unquestioned, inevitable 'reality' (Adam 1990, 1995). E. P. Thompson charts the gradual ascendance of measured clock time into working people's 'time-sense' (1967: 57). Originally the preserve of the privileged with access to advances in technology, clock time gradually pervaded all sections of society with industrialists' demand for an accurate measurement of a worker's 'labor time'. Twinned with this is a marked increase in an expectation of the 'pace' of life—what and how much a person is expected to do or reach during these periods of time—that in the West was catalyzed by the Industrial Revolution and has been exacerbated exponentially by advances in technology ever since (Adam 1995; Levine 2006; Burnett et al. 2007; Birth 2007). In a social climate pervaded by 'hurry sickness' (Dossey 1982), moments of time when we are required to be 'still' and *wait* can seem much more difficult to achieve with equanimity.

It is an interesting exercise, then, to explore instances of 'waiting' connected to academic working life, that is, increasingly infused by neoliberal, marketized discourses that constrain and influence what is seen to be 'appropriate' ways of being and doing in the academy, predominating over a previous conception of 'traditional' collegiate academic life (Deem 1998; Harris 2005; Leathwood and Read 2013; Read and Leathwood 2017) and encouraging a much 'faster' pace of academic life (Davies and Bansel 2005; Clegg 2010). This 'marketized' conception of academia consists of beliefs and values in relation to evaluation and accountability that are as problematic in its attempts to 'measure' academic endeavor as

'clock time' is able to measure and account for the 'messiness' of life itself (Leathwood and Read 2009, 2013; Bradley 2015).

Critique and resistance to this discourse has included an emerging 'slow' movement in academia (see, e.g., Garey et al. 2014; Mountz et al. 2015). Mendick (2014) however cautions on the need to examine how the discourse of 'slow' can at times implicitly support gendered classed and racialized patterns of inequality under a banner of idealizing a 'golden age' of academia. Moreover, in current times, with an increased distinction between those on secure positions and those on temporary or part-time contracts, some in the academy are more likely to have the ability than others to resist with such practices and to do so with less consequence (see also Leathwood and Read 2013; Martell 2014).

Just as there are normative 'ways of being and doing' in the academy that are highly gendered, classed, and 'racialized' (Reay 2004; Mirza 2006; Leathwood and Read 2009), time itself is experienced and negotiated differently according to complex matrices of identity and privilege. Bradley (2015) notes, for example, that as well as 'time' being 'money', having money (and the social capital of connections) may help in negotiating obstacles in order to 'free' more time for oneself, for example, in being able to afford childcare, spending money on taxis, and avoiding the need to wait in line for the bus. Indeed, in terms of waiting, it is possible to literally pay more money in order *not* to wait, for example, in paying for 'speedy boarding' passes on some airlines, so that some people can become—at least in certain areas of their lives—'nearly immune from waiting' (Levine 2006: 114). Through her analysis of discourses of single women 'waiting for the One' in popular culture, Lahad (2012, 2016) discusses the gendered and aged connotations of passivity infused with the notion of 'waiting', noting that 'waiting implicates the submission to ideological commands, through which single women are sanctioned and punished if they fail to comply with socio-temporal norms' (2016: 6). She draws on Bourdieu (2000) who delineates numerous ways in which 'waiting' is infused with unequal power relations:

...one would need to catalogue, and analyze, all the behaviors associated with the exercise of power over other people's time both on the side of the powerful (adjourning, deferring, delaying, raising false hopes or conversely

rushing, taking by surprise) and on the side of the 'patient' as they say in the medical universe, one of the sites par excellence of anxious powerless waiting. Waiting implies submission. (Bourdieu 2000: 228, in Lahad 2016)

There are times when we can both resist and challenge such positionings (although, as we have noted, some have more agency to do this than others). And, of course, there are pleasures and agency in the act and performance of waiting itself, as we go on to discuss. We were interested in exploring these complicated dynamics of 'waiting' as experienced in our own working lives—as two women with different backgrounds, caring responsibilities, and with contrasting levels of security and permanence in academia. How is our working time, and flows of waiting, experienced similarly and differently for us under such circumstances and parameters? This is what we attempted to explore by recording and discussing instances of 'waiting' over the course of a single week in our 'academic' lives.

Methodology

The practice and potential of autoethnography is in no way commonly agreed upon by the academic community. It has been diversely defined, ranging from a cultural study of one's own people (Hayano 1979; Anderson 2006) to a method which allows researchers to understand themselves in deeper ways, in turn enhancing their understanding of other issues (Hemmingson 2008). Sitting somewhere between these descriptions, our use of an autoethnographical approach here springs from Lisa's use of autoethnography in her PhD research, prompted by a desire to get behind the dominant experiences and representations of time in everyday urban life (Bradley 2015). While Lisa conducted a variety of autoethnographical 'experiments' for her doctoral research (including experiencing a period of time without clocks or conventional timekeeping, staggering the time to conduct a regular walk to a particular destination once a week, and comparing time experienced 'on holiday' and 'at work'), our method here was to designate a 'fieldwork week' in our

working lives, where we would take photographs of instances of 'waiting'. We would then find a time soon afterwards and meet and carry out a joint discussion of these experiences, using the photographs as prompts for the conversation. We ended up conducting these interviews over two lunchtimes, a simultaneously pleasurable experience and also one that speaks eloquently of our felt need to 'snatch' time for such research endeavors during a time period conventionally culturally linked to a period of leisure and sustenance in between other appointments conducted 'legitimately' in 'work time'.

In considering these methods, we were struck by just how difficult it is to capture the experience of waiting through photographs. We were aware of different ways in which we felt a sense of 'waiting' simultaneously at different times and different places for different things. Some periods of waiting time had a short duration (waiting to come home after a trip to the university campus; waiting for a child to wake from a nap). While other 'waits' had begun long before the week had started and were to go on long after: Lisa's 'wait' for her second child to be born (she was seven months pregnant at the time of our conversation); the wait for the results of our joint bid to the ESRC for funding for a project (that would guarantee Lisa full-time employment for three years). Other experiences of waiting were more fleeting but also seemed to evade visual representation—a number of times Barbara took a photo of her email inbox to signify a wait for an answer or for input or feedback on collaborative enterprises, feeling unable to represent these in more imaginative ways. Therefore we allowed a period of time after we had discussed our images to go through our diaries as an alternative prompt for other aspects of waiting we felt we may have 'missed' recording through the photo taking. Barbara also noted her need to look at her diary in order not only to remember the context of particular photographs but to make sense of the previous week ('because it's a complete jumble in my head')—showing the ways we need to utilize particular material 'props' that construct and portray time in particular categorized ways in order to understand and order everyday life's past, present, and future. So, paradoxically, while we took the photographs in order to help us remember and articulate aspects of waiting over that week, we ended up using other visual/textual 'props'

such as notes or diary entries in order to remember why we took those photographs in the first place.

Boundaries of 'Work' and 'Not Work'

Both of us were struck by the difficulties of establishing clear boundaries between 'work' and 'non-work' both in spatial and temporal terms, partly connected to the fluidity of the academic occupation. There are periods of time that are considered more likely to be 'non-work' time—time spent on vacation, sickness leave, weekends, evening and night-time hours—that can only be classified as such because there are contracted hours of paid work (Scott 2009). Academic contracts often specify a number of hours that should be devoted to the paid work of the position—however this remains notional for many academics, and many academics find themselves working well over this stated limit despite not technically being paid for this time (Highwood 2013) and also conduct academic work that their employers may consider to be 'in addition to their stated brief' or not a priority. Indeed, being an 'academic', like other 'vocations', is an identification not necessarily connected to a person's actual paid work or duties—so that a person may consider themselves to still be an academic even if they are not in current employment with an academic institution, and conversely some who teach/research in a university position may have stronger identification with other professional or vocational statuses, such as being a teacher, artist, writer, or lawyer (Leathwood and Read 2009).

Lisa expressed a concern at the time of interview that her photos were too 'similar' and on aspects of life not directly related to work. She felt that partly this was due to her part-time working pattern (two days a week). However when discussing the photographs she was easily able to discuss them in relation to work, even if it was in discussing how aspects of 'outside' life felt to her to be 'barriers' to her being able to undertake academic work. Barbara, who works full-time, stated that often her photographs were on aspects of life that were nominally 'outside' of work, but which could not be separated from work: whether this was a photo of a bus she was waiting for, using the waiting time to also read an academic

article, or taking a photo of her bedroom window while waiting to fall back to sleep, a period of fretfulness over a work situation causing a few hours of insomnia. Despite this, only one of her photographs was taken in her official ‘workplace’—demonstrating a locational fluidity, an agency in terms of *where* to undertake work, which she especially valued, but again speaks to the nebulousness of the status of doing/being an academic.

So therefore there was a certain fluidity in our notions of the boundaries of work and therefore of experiences of ‘waiting’ that may be work-related. We also found, interestingly, that there were some qualitative differences of experience in waiting that related to whether we felt the ‘waiting’ was something instigated by others and externally ‘imposed’ on us, whether we ourselves were ‘imposing’ waiting on others (linking to the power relations infused in the waiting process discussed above)—or indeed a third form of ‘waiting’: times when we perceived that we were making *ourselves* wait.

‘Self-Inflicted’ Waiting

Lisa: A lot of the waiting we do in academia, it’s external—so we’re waiting on emails from people, we’re waiting for students to turn up, transport to turn up to get us places, the decisions of funding applications, things like that, but there’s also *us* putting off things that we have to do.

One of Lisa’s photos was of a thermostat in her parents’ house. In visiting her parents and doing some work while there, she was reminded of a way in which she habitually ‘imposed’ waiting on herself in relation to her own working environment in her own home:

Lisa: I very rarely put the heating on in our house, because I have to get a stepstool out to climb up to do it, which is fine to do, but I’m a bit too lazy to do it, and it got me thinking of the self-inflicted waiting that I do...[....] I almost kind of procrastinate in terms of my own comfort [...] I would often wait until Jason got home, or

wait until the evening to—I often kind of deprive myself...[...]
I don't know why.

Lisa recognized such aspects of 'self-imposed' waiting not only in terms of controlling or organizing her work environment but also in terms of the process of writing itself.

Lisa: There were sections of the PhD that I didn't write until the very very end, I was almost...I was waiting to do them, I was waiting for the perfect conditions, I was waiting for—who knows, but they sat there...

She describes that one such section was about a quilt she had made as part of her autoethnographic methodology which was heavily invested in meaning for her. She believes that this investment contributed to her procrastination around tackling this part of the 'writing up' process:

Lisa: I think there's probably a lot of that, we do the pieces of work that we're not emotionally attached to [...] I think it [the quilt] was the bit that I was proudest of—that I'd allowed myself to make a quilt in the first place, and so I thought I had to do it justice in writing it up. And I'd never felt I was there yet in order to write it up well. And even now in reading that section it reads fine [...] but I still want it to be better than it was....

The 'finished product' of such work shows nothing of the *temporality* of the writing process, the stops and starts, the nonlinear slow progression and revision, breaks and breakdowns that are involved in the process of weaving everything together to form a 'whole'. Indeed part of the deemed 'success' of written work in academia is for a piece of writing to have a fluid coherence or 'polish' that precisely does not show the messy mechanics of its slow (and sometimes painful!) development. And what might seem to us to be purely individualized periods of procrastination are often influenced by aspects of our own subjectivities and the constraints of the contexts in which we are sitting down to write. This can be highly gendered, classed, and racialized—for example, the 'polished'

self-confident communication style of academic language is arguably more easily adopted by those from middle-class or upper-class backgrounds, those who move through academia ‘like a fish in water’ (Bourdieu 1987). Moreover, confidence in the reception of your work by others may be more easily felt by those who have an established position in academia to ‘validate’ them and those whose embodied selves fit more closely the dominant discursive construction of the ‘valid’ ‘serious’ academic—white, middle-class, middle-aged, male (see Mahony and Zmroczek 1997; Acker and Armenti 2004; Mirza 2006; Leathwood and Read 2009). Meanwhile, while being influenced by our perceptions of its reception by an imagined critical audience, we are also juggling space to find time to write in between other caring commitments and obligations that are also more pressing for those like Lisa who (through monetary constraints or a sense of guilt at relinquishing the caring role) do not feel able to ‘buy time’ through arranging paid childcare (Acker and Webber 2006). Therefore although we perceive and experience these dynamics as ‘self-inflicted’ instances of waiting, they are nevertheless socially imbued, and our agency within this is only, of course, a partial agency that operates under ‘social constraints’.

‘Time Squeezing’, Time ‘Management’, and the Presentation of the Academic in Everyday Life

There was a lot of discussion in our conversation about the ways in which we aimed to juggle and compress time, in order to fit as much as possible into a small confined temporal space—known as ‘time squeezing’ (Southerton 2003). This ranged from the dizziness of a day switching quickly from one type of work to another type of work needing very different skills (teaching, writing, meetings, fieldwork) to aiming to arrange meetings into defined days of the week in order to carve out other spaces to work from home—resulting in long intense and slightly manically busy days on campus on ‘appointment days’. Barbara recounted as one of her photograph stories an incident during the week, where she had tried

to fit in a personal task before a work task, without success. One aspect of the week had been the wait for payday—despite having a permanent job with a regular monthly income, she had run low on funds and was trying to change some foreign currency into sterling to help. She had optimistically hoped that she would have enough time to do this before a supervision meeting; however 'I ended up stuck in the queue from hell at the post office [...]'. She was embarrassed to bypass the queue by going straight to the bureau de change window (due to a combination of feeling it would be violating the unwritten 'spirit' of the queue and also due to a fear of being seen to be 'rude' by others in the queue for such an infringement). She therefore stood waiting in the queue and grew steadily more (inwardly) annoyed at others who were not concerned at all about social judgements and were happily bypassing the queue and using the bureau de change window. Eventually mounting anxiety at missing her supervision appointment caused her to leave the queue without having been able to change her money and ended up late for the supervision appointment (giving an evasive truncated version of the story to her student and co-supervisor out of further embarrassment at both her lack of 'time management' and being in a weak financial position). We can see here aspects of culturally gendered behaviors and perceptions (fear of being assertive/transgressing social norms by using the bureau de change window; fear of being judged negatively by others) that also contributed to this incident of (unfruitful) waiting (see Scott 2009). Moreover, Barbara's evasiveness as to the reasons for her lateness for the supervision appointment was actually motivated less by personally held feelings of shame or guilt at her normative 'disorganization' in terms of time and money, but by a concern not to 'lose face' with her student and co-supervisor. She realized through analyzing this incident how much she edits her 'presentation of self' in order to try and perform a discursively constructed notion of the 'academic' as being slightly quirky and informal (in comparison to a business or legal professional, say), but nevertheless ultimately 'sensible, orderly, trustworthy, moderate, and in control'—including being in control of time.

Barbara: Most of the time I try and be, I guess, professional-*ish*, but I'm not a particularly smart person...part of the thing I love about

the job is you don't have to be 'business-corporate', and you are allowed to sometimes say 'oh gosh I've been busy doing x y z, and people being fine about it [...] but if you do it too much...for me there feels like there's a limit and sometimes I feel like I'm not in control of it, and I'm letting too much of my inner scattiness onto the outside, and people will realise.

There are complex patterns here in relation to power, status, privilege, and dis/advantage—as Schwartz argues, 'the distribution of waiting time coincides with the distribution of power' (1974: 5; see also Lahad 2012). Barbara arguably only feels the need to present herself as 'in control' of time because of her professional role—one that is connected to a range of material and social advantages—yet gendered insecurities around presentation of an 'assertive' powerful self are also invoked in her experience in the post office that paradoxically then threaten to disrupt her intended 'professional' self-presentation.

Lisa went on to relate how she and her ex-supervisor were working on a project with a third colleague, who always turned up a little late for meetings, about ten past the hour, and left a little early, and that her ex-supervisor commented that this colleague was on 'academic time'—the rhythm of the 'teaching hour' where classes always started a little past the hour and ended a little before due to students who travel from one class to the next. Lisa and Barbara both agreed that they were not quite used to this rhythm of time either and discussed how both of them would usually start a class 'on the dot' if all the students were there and teach 'right up to the wire' of the hour, forgetting that oftentimes another lecturer would be waiting to use the room. Both felt that responsibility for the timing of teaching sessions and meetings was an aspect of work that was quite mentally draining and that when the responsibility was lifted (e.g., during the day before when Lisa attended an all-day event organized by others) it felt like a 'treat'. Although in general both cherished the relative freedom of the job in terms of being 'in charge of your own time', there was also an element of pleasure in being temporarily able to give this power up to others and not 'having to be in control'—the control of time being a very simple and direct way of experiencing shifting degrees of

power and responsibility involved in academic life and our levels of agency within this.

The 'Breathing Space' of Waiting...

Of course, such agency is constrained at all times by our own identity positionings, subjectivities, and the constellations of our connectivities with others—and experienced by us emotionally in a multitude of ways. This was brought to the fore in our conversations when Lisa discussed a picture of her daughter asleep in her car. Lisa took the photo to illustrate a regular occurrence for her—waiting while her daughter sleeps. Lisa explained that as they live in a top floor flat, there's no easy way of transporting her daughter upstairs without waking her. Ensuring that her daughter has a lunchtime nap means that she will then sleep reasonably early around 7pm, and Lisa can spend a few hours relaxing in the evening. If she has a later nap, then this relaxation time is missed, and with no nap then the evening is frantic as Lisa and her partner have to try and keep their daughter awake during dinner and bath time. Therefore if Lisa's daughter does fall asleep at lunchtime, Lisa will often spend that time waiting—even if this is in the car. Sometimes Lisa will also have a quick nap, but nowadays she often spends this time 'fitting in some work'.

Lisa: So waiting isn't necessarily always a negative thing....in some ways there's a frustration there—I'm stuck in the car, having to work with my laptop on my knee. But there's also kind of a relief there—you know what, I don't need to be in the office right now, and I don't need to go up the stairs and do all that....

In this way, the time spent waiting while her daughter is asleep is experienced in a variety of emotional ways by Lisa—the annoyance of the practical difficulties of her surroundings (and the need to maximize the use of 'snatches' of time to work in such spaces due to her caring commitments) mixed with the feeling of relief or pleasurable enjoyment where

the imposed stillness can also be used as unexpected yet ‘legitimate’ free time.

We then discussed the similarity between this dynamic and the experience of waiting after having sent an email to a colleague in relation to a joint project or endeavor:

Lisa: I suppose when you’re waiting on [work] emails as well, back from people, it almost kind of gives you a breathing space... [...] I think there’s something really liberating when you finally draft that email and press send, and it’s somebody else’s thing to deal with...

Barbara: Yes! Passing the buck! And you don’t have to then deal with it for a little period of time I suppose the down side of that is the sort of guilt, when you’ve got a lot of emails in your inbox, that *have* been passed over to you, and you’re sort of aware of them weighing on your head. And you’ve got in your head a probably very subjective idea of what’s an appropriate time to send it back to [them].

Since the 1990s emails have become by far the most commonly used form of communication between university staff and take up a sizeable part of the working day (or night)—in a rather nebulous, unquantifiable way. Reflecting on this, Lisa noted the difficulties she has, as an ‘atypical’ hourly paid worker, of logging in how much time is exactly spent in the process of reading and replying to emails, which is often undertaken in sporadic bursts throughout the day. Such time also often goes unregistered by workload systems that purportedly aim to map in quantifiable ‘chunks’ the hours that employees should spend on particular tasks. Indeed one of the photos Barbara took was of the Skype button on her desktop—while waiting for a Skype supervision to start, she took the chance to reply to a few emails at the same time.

The time spent dealing with emails is not of course always restricted to the acts of reading and writing, but also the time spent on reflection and mulling over issues within them, and pondering possible ways of replying—often taken, as we noted at the beginning of the chapter, in supposedly ‘non-work’ spaces and times of day such as walking down the road

or lying in bed at night. Lisa noted the importance of valuing such nebulous periods of time, which were often 'waiting times' for the gestation and development of creative ideas.

Lisa: One of the reasons why I made the quilt [submitted as part of her PhD] was that I noticed that the times I was writing the PhD wasn't when I was sitting at the computer—it was when I was in the shower, sitting crocheting at night [...] it just really struck me that the physical space we inhabit to write isn't the actual emotional and mental space we need to write. But all of that kind of flows outwith the boundaries of what a kind of 'normal' academic day should be. It's in our dreams, and when we're waking up in the middle of the night, and it's when we're on the bus [...] it's not sat in an office in front of the computer [...] In many ways I wouldn't change it, but I would like it to be recognized actually what spaces academia inhabits—because it's not the university, it's not the campus, it can't be demarcated in those ways.

Waiting...for Decisions

Of course, the workload system is not the only practice or procedure that attempts to quantifiably record and measure academic work and life. Both Lisa and Barbara are required by the university to undertake an annual appraisal where targets are set for the upcoming year. In Lisa's case this was something of a farce in that she hadn't been set any targets for the previous year as she hadn't taken on the work yet, and she can't set any for the year ahead, as her contract is coming to an end and she will be on (unpaid) maternity leave.

Barbara's targets were largely based around publication and, even more importantly, research funding—anxiety around which had caused her to wake up in the middle of the night the week before, recorded by the photograph of her bedroom window. Throughout the period of the fieldwork, indeed throughout much of 2016, Lisa and Barbara had both been waiting on a decision for their bid for a research grant in the ESRC open

call. For Barbara the anxiety related to the key expectation of her job to bring in research funding, and a nebulous feeling of insecurity generated by pondering the consequences of being repeatedly unsuccessful in this arena. She discussed how such feelings of insecurity are not generated directly from communications from university management, but from her own 'self-policing' in response to general discourses of 'appropriate' academic performance:

Barbara: In a way I'm already there with a ball and chain and whip over my head saying 'you are the most terrible person because you haven't brought in xyz funding, therefore you don't deserve to be there'.

For Lisa the connection between the grant and job security was much more immediate, as the grant would supply her with a three-year full-time contract on a grade scale that recognized her PhD and experience. For Lisa, it was the first time she had been involved in the preparation of a large bid from start to finish, and she was struck by the length of time involved and the long periods of waiting time during the process—firstly the inevitable waiting time needed for team members to all develop sections of the bid and contribute feedback on other sections, waiting for internal feedback at school and college level, for permissions to conduct fieldwork by gatekeepers, and now finally waiting for the application to be evaluated by the funders. For Lisa this labyrinthine process had been more eye-opening than anxiety-making, which she related to her current marginal position in academia:

Lisa: I [experience insomnia] less now, but when I do it's not often about work. Not since I finished the PhD. And I don't know if that's because I don't have that kind of investment in anything yet, the same way that I did with the PhD. And I don't feel my career's riding on anything because I don't feel like I've *got* a career. In some ways it's nice [not to be feeling the anxiety] [...] There's a part of me that's reluctant to go back into it [...] I enjoy being calm! It feels like a nice way to be! [...] But I also want to have enough money to pay my bills...

We began to talk about the ways in which processes like our annual appraisals and workload models attempt to construct a linear, clear, measurable sense of time that contradicts the unpredictability and 'messiness' of real life, including our caring and personal commitments to friends and family, times when we ourselves or others become ill or bereaved, and the need to take extra time for experiences such as a pregnancy that do not run to a predictable schedule. As feminist writers such as Davies (1994) and Odih (1999) note, the gendered activities of care time can often run counter to dominant linear (masculinized) 'clock time':

Lisa: I've encountered academia at a time in my life when my physical body, my biology, all of those types of things, are very much *present*. And because of that I can't really imagine a time when they're not. 'Cause I think well people get ill, you get different desires, lots of things—those are the things that make me who I am, not how many papers I write. I can't quite take it seriously, and I don't know how to bring those things together.

Barbara: I think that's kind of a very sane reaction to the whole thing, you know what I mean? I can get really sucked into it, where, even though I do work on academic culture and stuff like that, I still find myself thinking 'Oh my god, I'm not good enough, I'm not this, I'm not that, I need to be more productive....' I just bought a book called *How to Be a Productivity Ninja*! [both laugh]. Needless to say I read the first few pages and thought 'oh no....!'

Lisa: But you still bought the book!

Barbara: Yes, it's ridiculous!

Conclusion

The exercise of attempting to record instances of 'waiting' in our working lives ended up making us acutely aware of the ways in which the temporal pervades our lives—in particular, the ways in which occupational,

institutional, familial, personal, and social factors interwove and shaped these experiences and the limits of our many and varied attempts at agency within these constraints. In analyzing these instances of ‘waiting’, it became clear that for Lisa in particular the constraints of her position as carer were very direct, and the explicit precariousness of her working conditions were felt much more acutely than for Barbara, whose temporal concerns and anxieties revolved more around the attempts to present a particular professional image (‘You want to look like a swan gliding on the water, and disguise the flailing limbs underneath’) and self-regulation of productivity via nebulous fears of the potentially dire consequences of academic ‘failure’. Nevertheless, the exercise did bring up realizations we weren’t expecting—for example, the realization of the potential pleasures and possibilities of waiting as a ‘breathing space’ in the contemporary ‘fast’ world of academia and indeed the simple pleasure of ‘making time’ to meet with each other over lunch and reflect on these experiences. As Lahad (2012) notes, ‘waiting has multiple facets: it can be tranquil or anxious, patient or impatient, a waste of time or an important and meaningful interval in our lives’ (2012: 165).

Moreover, and despite the continued dominance of the conception of the academic as a dispassionate, ‘rational subject’ and HE as an ‘emotion-free zone’ (Leathwood and Hey 2009: 429), our accounts of these temporal facets of academic work are *saturated* with emotions, arguably often felt more strongly by those who feel in some sense ‘othered’ in the dominant cultures and practices of HE, whether due to social positionings/identities such as gender, class, and ‘race’ and/or through contractual status and position. As we recount here our own accounts are threaded through with emotions such as anxiety, blame, guilt, fear, and at certain more positive moments, relief, happiness, satisfaction, and pride—emotions that are intimately connected to our own identities and positionings—whether these be in some senses privileged and some instances more marginal and ‘other’ to normative conceptions of the academic.

Overall, conducting this exercise made us both acutely aware of the ways in which seemingly innocuous, personalized events in ‘everyday life’ are actually socially located. Feminist academics are of course acutely aware of the myriad ways in which ‘the personal is political’, and in acknowledging and identifying the ways in which our day-to-day working

practices may reflect—and help reinforce—inequity, we can also then work to try and subvert or challenge such practices.

At the time of writing Lisa has given birth to her second daughter; we were ultimately unsuccessful with our research funding bid; Barbara still hasn't found out how to be a productivity ninja.

Acknowledgment *The authors would like to thank the editors for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this paper.*

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A Long Goodbye to the ‘Good Girl’: An Auto-ethnographic Account

Pat Thomson

Coming to the end of a working life is a peculiar thing. I’ve chosen to stay working full time past the age when I could retire. However, I now—finally—seem to have a stronger sense of being able to choose what to do, when, and why. My approach—until now largely unspoken—has been to do enough of what is required in the institution and only that. The remainder of the time I fill up with the teaching, research, and writing that I want to do. I am of course in the fortunate—read privileged, senior, and permanent—position of being able to make this choice. And it no doubt helps that what I want to do is largely of use to the institution. At the very end of my career, it seems I have finally shucked off a lifelong practice of doing the right thing.

This chapter is an impressionistic auto-ethnographic account of the production and then the rejection of doing the right thing, of being a ‘good girl’. I take as my starting point the understanding that all of us arrive in higher education from somewhere else and that that somewhere else is important. In the first half of the chapter, I address the notion that

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a second wave feminist's moral duty was and is to become 'a leader' and change the world. The second half of the chapter covers the strategies I have developed to work in higher education and to divest myself of most of my good girl habits.

Becoming Femocrat

The early 1970s in Australia were heady times. Women teachers were not allowed to wear trousers to school. Some staffrooms were segregated along gender lines, as were schools. Senior leaders in all but single-sex schools were overwhelmingly male. There were few women teaching Maths and Science. This discriminatory picture was mirrored in most fields of employment and women took action to change it. After a long struggle, women were legally granted equal pay. Birth control became freely available. This was a time to reject the moral trappings of the state—marriage, male surnames, denial of sexual pleasure, compulsory heterosexuality, the assumption that any job was beyond a woman's capacity.

Global issues, such as women's inequality and exploitative labour markets, always have local inflexions and nation-state specific solutions (Robertson 1995) and in the seventies, and as a direct result of feminist activism, a distinctly Australian political solution was effected—femocracy. Femocrats were women appointed to public service positions who were tasked with leading the shift away from discriminatory gendered working practices. Femocrats worked hard to get more women into leadership positions across the board—in public organisations such as schools and hospitals and in private companies and boards. Every woman in a senior post was counted a victory against the old male-dominated system.

I was a good femocrat. I was in a school leadership position from 1975 on, working first in an alternative community school and then a full-service school: in 1984, I took over a K-12¹ 'all-through' school. All three schools served communities that were struggling in a rapidly de-industrialising state economy. As one of the few women principals in such a school, it was hardly surprising that I was invited onto state and national policy making committees and boards. I ticked a number of 'equity' boxes. I was both amenable but also somewhat 'bolshie' about

system leadership in an education system that was demonstrably highly inequitable. I was in a bind that was familiar to femocrats and to anyone who attempts to change systems from within:

- I/we needed to be good at our jobs. I/we couldn't be the one who showed that those concerned for equity were all ideas and practically incompetent. I/we had to know the game and play it, even if I/we wanted to change it at the same time. And, in reality, I/we were strongly committed to a public education system and wanted it to be much better than it was. I/we cared about the notion of public good. It wasn't a stretch to ask me/us to do a good job for the communities we served. That was my/our purpose, we argued. I/we had to do the job well.
- Changing the game from within meant more than mounting critique. It also meant devising and implementing innovative approaches which showed that more equitable ways of doing school were possible. This was ironically also and at the same time, playing the system game, working for its betterment—being a good corporate citizen of an inequitable organisation (Thomson 2010).
- Change isn't an individual effort. In order to effect change, I/we worked collaboratively with many others, including those who were outspoken critics. In my case this meant being associated with the teachers' union and with other 'identity'-based organisations. This sometimes led to open conflict with the system in relation to working conditions, salary, and so on.

Through this moral-ethical-political tangle, I/we were simultaneously positioned as both good and bad girl(s). A burr under the saddle. An 'effective' leader, even 'outstanding', but one who needed to be managed. Someone to be kept in the tent but in her place.

However, when I somewhat reluctantly joined the South Australian Secondary Principals Association in 1984, there were still only three women. I made it four. I was met by the then President of the Association with a handshake and the words 'Welcome to the club'. At the time it did feel, just as the femocrat strategy suggested, that there was something important about breaking into male leadership ranks. While it didn't necessarily advance the cause of women teachers or teaching assistants or girls, there was something significant, highly symbolic, morally right,

about making it to the top of the school leadership tree. Becoming a woman school leader was carrying on the feminist campaign, showing that women could do the job as well as any man, that gender was not a marker of innate authority and/or competency.

But senior women were expected to be superhuman. They had to be better than good at their jobs. They had to seamlessly manage family responsibilities in order to show that these were not, as the old orthodoxy suggested, going to prevent her doing her job. Every senior woman was expected to support and mentor other women to follow the same path. This was the right thing to do. Becoming a woman in leadership was the new way to be a good girl.

Nevertheless, I was very uncertain about the inevitability of continuous promotion out of schools and into head office, even though that was the move I made. Despite misgivings, I made the move out of school into head office at a time when serious budget cuts were being made at state level and when the federal government was demanding a national curriculum and a comparable national data collection. More feminists were moving in all the time, even though femocrat politics were on the wane.

My ambivalence was often on show in the way that I dressed. I largely refused to be suited and booted, only donning the jacket and heels when it would have shown the school in a poor light if I hadn't. I often had eccentrically dyed and styled hair, experimented with 'small designer' clothing, and wore a lot of handcrafted silver jewellery. I was perhaps able to be pigeonholed as 'artsy'—I certainly didn't fit the mould of senior bureaucrat. My external and internal matched—I was an uneasy 'fit' in the system—they were an expression of the ambivalent position of being both good/not so good at the same time.

The disjunction between my politics and day job increased over time as the school system became more wedded to corporate approaches. New public management with its emphasis on 'human capital', new forms of budgeting, and political accountability accompanied the turn to school self-management (Thomson 1998).

When I entered higher education in the late 1990s after an apparently highly successful career in schools, I was in part abandoning the idea that I would one day run the state education system, become its first woman Chief Executive. This was not an entirely unrealistic notion. The last two of my 27 years in the school system were spent in head office in a very

senior position, and it seemed entirely possible that my career could peak by finally attaining the top job. And other people were always telling me this was what I *should* do. But fate intervened via the vicissitudes of organisational restructuring, and I decided instead to pursue further study.

Reflecting back on this part of my career is to see an over-optimistic sense of how easy it might be to change systems, the naivety of the time. Nancy Fraser (2013) has argued that feminists generally placed too much trust in the nation state and were caught napping when politicians abruptly embraced neoliberalism. This is certainly the case in Australia. Australian femocrat strategies that focused on changing outcomes in health, education, and welfare were arguably remarkably easily sutured into emerging and more noxious neoliberal audit practices. My career in school education could be seen as a tiny instantiation of what Eisenstein (2009) suggests was the appropriation of feminism by politics and capital through seduction. Seduction depends on the interpellation of the desires of feminism/feminists to make a difference and the rhetorical congruence of a moral narrative of the rights of women to equal pay and position. It is not only women's productive and reproductive labour that are exploited by contemporary capitalist states but also their ideological and political labour too. This is certainly what happened to me and many of my peers.

However by the 1990s when I moved into higher education, the femocrat strategy had weakened under the combined assault of neoliberalism and a vituperative misogynist backlash. I was no longer convinced that simply going for the top job was a good strategy, nor that wholistic organisational change was straightforward.

A Second Career: Higher Education

I don't want to labour the story of my PhD and entry into higher education. It is enough to say that I finished off the prerequisite tome quickly and successfully. I was seconded from the school system into a local university to establish a new professional doctorate for existing and aspiring school leaders. This allowed me to develop a renewed sense of what a good girl might do. I often fantasised that this professional doctorate was my revenge on my employer—supporting school leaders to read, to critique, and to develop their own research would mean no more naïve readings of

policy. And being in ‘the university’ meant allowed a ‘gloves-off’ approach to questions of education and equity. No longer constrained by being a femocrat reformer from within, I found it very comfortable mounting a well-argued and well-evidenced critique from ‘outside’. It seemed that I had finally been able to leave the requirements to be good behind. The move into higher education had apparently resolved all my ambivalences.

Alas. Being a good girl is about a disposition, not a locus, a context, the place you are employed. Being good is an embodied desire to always do what is required—and then some. By the time, I went into higher education in my late forties, I was well schooled in understanding what was required of me. This was an essential part of my being—I had taken on and taken up the notion of performing well. I not only wanted to meet expectations but also exceed them. I’d been doing this pretty well all my life, despite some rebellious flourishes along the way.

In using the term disposition, I have invoked a Bourdieusian perspective. Bourdieu argued that the habitus—a constellation of lived dispositions—is formed firstly within the family in a general field of power (Bourdieu 1993; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Bourdieu argues that subsequent immersion in fields, such as education, adds further dispositions, some of which might be in tension with those in the primary habitus (Bourdieu 1987). I have suggested that the women’s movement supported a with/against disposition of working for change by both challenging and conforming to the logics of the education field. This was the case for me in schools and subsequently in higher education.

Bourdieu suggested that both lack of ‘fit’ between field and habitus, and ‘habitus clivé’, a clash between the primary habitus and later dispositions, could prompt radical critical reflexivity (Bourdieu 1990). Archer (2007, 2012) set out to offer an alternative view grounded in empirical investigations of ‘internal’ and ‘ethical’ reflexive conversations; these showed the ways in which individuals thought about and through both everyday issues and crises. In similar vein, Sayers (2010) suggests that it is necessary to modify Bourdieu’s notion of reflexivity through:

- (1) a modified concept of habitus that allows room for individual reflexivity and includes ethical dispositions; (2) a focus on emotions as intelligent responses to objective circumstances and as indicators of well-being; (3) a

broader understanding of normativity that avoids reducing it to either the pursuit of self-interest and various forms of capital or outworkings of the habitus; and (4) an acknowledgement of human vulnerability and our relationship to the world of concern.

I have dealt with aspects of ethics and emotions in this chapter but along the way. It is important to the second part of my story to bring them more into focus, as Sayers suggests.

First there is pleasure. There are not simply normative, political, or dispositional reasons to work hard being a 'good girl'. Work in education brings its own pleasures and rewards. Teaching can be challenging, but it can also be a source of satisfaction, inspiration, and imagination (McWilliam 2000). Classrooms, lecture room tutorials, and staff rooms are often places for 'relational aesthetics' (Bourriaud 1998), moments of intense sociability, and reciprocity. A collective sense of purpose *and* enjoyment is an important reason to 'do well'.

There are more negative emotions too. Desire to be a good girl. Enjoyment at being noticed and rewarded. Shame in wanting to have approval and position. Anger at being so apparently compliant with the system. Pride in accomplishments. Competitive—with other leaders in other schools and with applicants for jobs. ... I could not entirely resolve these dilemmas arising from the disposition to do the job well, to aspire to change the system, and to reject it.

When I moved into higher education, I thought that the ethical-emotional dilemmas had all been dealt with, but this was not the case. However, I also brought femocrat dispositions and learnings with me, and these provided a basis from which I could assess my new surrounds and what I might do.

Living in and with Higher Education

As a femocrat, I had learnt that one of the key early tasks in an organisation was to understand its *modus operandi*. In Bourdieusian terms, this now meant becoming aware of the higher education game and its *doxa*. Fortunately, I did not have to work this out entirely for myself.

There is a considerable literature on higher education, its purposes and practices, and I eagerly delved into this corpus. My early reading ranged through sociological and philosophical theory—for instance, Bourdieu's explanations of the (re)production of particular forms of cultural, social, and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1988; Bourdieu et al. 1995), Foucault's explication of how knowledge and ways of knowing produce subjects, social relations and practices and moral 'truths' (Foucault 1972, 1977), and de Certeau's notions of 'the scriptural economy' and resistances to it (de Certeau 1988). I married this social theory with readings around the performativity of higher education (Blackmore and Sachs 2007) and its corporatisation and marketisation (Marginson and Considine 2000). I also read empirical studies around higher education pedagogies, the experiences of 'nontraditional students' and academic writing and publishing.

This reading may have positioned me to think rather negatively about what I was about to take on in my new university position. How would I deal with the kinds of demands to 'perform' and to the regular audits, performance management meetings? Would my old disposition to succeed, lead, and meet the all of the expectations take over? Or would I be able to adopt a more nuanced position and one somewhat less uncomfortable?

Two fortuitous accidental meetings made a great deal of difference to my entry to higher education and the ways in which I took up the intellectual resources I'd garnered from my reading.

The first serendipity moment oriented me to academic writing and to change. As a school principal, I had maintained a pedagogical interest in language and writing and usually taught a class of reluctant readers and writers. As I enrolled in the PhD, and in those days enrolment did mean physically being present in the institution, I bumped into Bill Green, an academic I vaguely knew through the English subject association. When I told him my doctoral intentions, he said 'Just think of it as a genre'. There were almost no books on doctoral writing at the time, but I knew what a genre was. I took from his comment that I needed to read some doctoral theses and work out their family textual characteristics. I did this and this led to reading the then emerging work around research and narrative theory (Riessman 1993), texts as representations (Hall 1997), and the artistic possibilities of academic publication (Winter 1988). I grasped

early on that while there were conventions in academic writing, there were also moves to disrupt (Stronach and MacLure 1997) and change them (Richardson 1997). However, the interest in academic writing that stemmed from that accidental meeting gave me a position from which to speak in the academy and to speak back to it. It gave me a particular ethical politics to stand for, as I will explain.

The second accidental meeting occurred after I had completed the PhD and was asked to speak as a 'successful graduate' to doctoral researchers. I chose to discuss the writing choices I had made in my thesis text; my Big Book had married a fairly orthodox sociological argument with visual and fictive interleaves. In my talk I argued that too little attention was paid to academic writing except in the technical sense and that this ignored the importance of scholarly communication and conversation. At the end of my talk, Barbara Kamler, an academic staff member at the university, rushed up to me, sharing her own views on academic writing and the lack of attention paid to it (contemporaneous with Rose and McClafferty 2001). We began a conversation about academic writing that then went on for 15 years, numerous workshops, a handful of refereed papers, and four books (Kamler and Thomson 2006/2014; Thomson and Kamler 2013, 2016). This partnership has been the backbone of my academic life, a source of great pleasure, and a primary reason for being in higher education. I return to this point later.

However, I also understood the doxa of university and grasped the basics of the logics of its practice. And I met them as much as I needed to. Academics were expected to publish. No worries. Publish I would. A few critical chapters about equity and schooling to start with and the odd essay review. Then the book of the thesis (Thomson 2002). Then refereed papers and books in a steady stream. Grants? Win money? No worries. Of course. After four years in the academy I had written and earned enough to be invited to interview for a job in the UK—a position I hadn't applied for and hadn't even thought about. The combination of street cred and upward academic trajectory seemed to have paid off in a preresirement adventure. Pack up house and home and move to the other side of the world.

The move to the UK offered more research funding, many more opportunities to publish, and more immediate connections with scholars

with similar interests. Mobility was good to and for me. But I have had to learn about a new school system and its history. For the first couple of years I was at Nottingham, I didn't write anything about the UK, and England in particular, in case I got it badly wrong. Even now, 14 years later, I still often check my version of events with home-grown colleagues. In the UK, I was interestingly already known and also unknown. I was able to reestablish myself, my credibility and authority. I built new co-research relationships and a research agenda based in my old loves of the arts and creativity. I was able in part to establish myself as a different kind of person without all of that history of school leadership and success. Not such a good girl.

But higher education in the UK is not without its difficulties and debates (e.g. Barnett 2010; Macfarlane 2004). There are league tables for everything. Universities are dominated by the need to do well on student satisfaction surveys, research income, citations, and in tables purporting to show world status and prestige. And schools of education are subject to an annual manipulation of dwindling teacher education places and regular inspections. The ongoing spectre of the research audit scheme, currently called the REF (Research Excellence Framework), produces a performative and forensic culture in which individual academic research income and publications are continually monitored and compared to arbitrary internal and external norms.

As a senior member of staff, I have—quite rightly—been expected to take my share of leadership and management. But because I was less than enthusiastic about general oversight of the school, and no longer in thrall to the notion of being the 'top girl', I refused to even consider a role as Head of School. This was a considerable step away from my past as I previously would have been both flattered and felt obligated to meet such an expectation. There was of course no escaping corporate duty entirely. I was asked to take up the position of Director of Research in my school. I thus found myself responsible for the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). This brought me straight into the micro-politics of sorting and sifting staff performance and the historical gap between education researchers and many teacher educators.² I was fortunate in that the RAE funding formula favoured an inclusive approach; it was possible for me and my colleagues in the professoriate to focus on getting work from

everyone into the count. This experience was in stark contrast to the highly selective approach which dominated the subsequent REF, for which I was not responsible. I had by then moved on to a research leadership position across the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences. There my focus was on funding and on public engagement and impact activities.

Both of these leadership positions were focused on institutional and individual performance. Demands for increased and/or better numbers were directed from above, through my positional level and down the hierarchy. I was at a performative pointy end. Attendance at university meetings focused on the financial and reputational consequences of doing badly in audit terms: this emphasised the critical importance of collective effort in the current policy climate. Even if we were critical of the publication and funding agendas, we would collectively suffer if we as individuals didn't pay the game.

Here then was my new ethical dilemma. How much should I buy into the press for publication and research income? How much should I turn a blind eye to those who were trying to avoid the issue? How was I to deal with colleagues whose strength wasn't in publication and research but in teaching? How could I mediate the informal culture of naming and shaming those who apparently failed the scholarly productivity test? Being a good girl meant having to find an ethical way through this dilemma, not simply doing what I was bid. I guess I managed this somehow, although I do rather suspect some of my colleagues still feel obliged to talk about their latest book or progress on a paper when they bump into me.

Finding a Place to Be Good Enough

As I now approach the end of my second career, I often find myself pondering the conjunction of my own inclinations and that of the university. The contemporary university relies on academic staff who are ready and willing to be highly productive. We must publish widely and for a range of audiences, including for audit. We must attract funding, work in interdisciplinary teams, produce demonstrable research impact. We have to teach face to face and increasingly online and be judged better than

satisfactory by our students. I continually ask myself—Does it really matter that my love of reading and writing and subsequent publishing satisfies me and also helps the university and meets neoliberal performative agendas? Can I do my civic scholarly duty and also do what I want? (Where does I want come from?) Can I not work with and against toxic policies at the same time, as Patti Lather (1991) suggests?

The answer it seems to me now lies somewhere in the two happy accidents that led me to a focus on academic writing and publishing and on co-researching and writing. It is fortuitous that the place where I landed in higher education was academic writing and publishing. Even though this is still not my primary area of funded research, the focus on writing allows me to work on areas that the institution thinks are important, as do I, although for somewhat different reasons.

While institutions care a great deal about the work that academic publication does in audit and reputational league tables, there are other views. My own is that:

1. Reading and writing is enjoyable and one of the pleasures of academic life—the time to read and reflect as Bourdieu (1988) notes is a privilege of the position, and
2. The job of a scholar is to be scholarly, serving the public good through teaching, research—and writing. This view is perhaps more attune to a reworked Humboldtian ideal, rather than the neoliberal view of the university as an engine of the knowledge economy (c.f. Holmwood 2011). The role of a Professor is to profess, not simply their own research interests but that of scholarship more generally.

I can and do promote these alternative moral reasons to write and publish. I can happily argue that writing and publishing aren't simply a capitulation to performativity.

A focus on academic writing and publication has allowed me to carve out an area through which I can support other people to play the academic game but also to see it for what it is and isn't. My talks, workshops, and my writings about writing build from those very early conversations with Barbara Kamler, where we decided that we would not simply present 'how-to-do-it' workshops. We would always discuss writing as a

situated practice, as integral to higher education histories and policies, as part of disciplinary mores and assumptions, as a craft and an art form. Our approach is acceptable to the institution, and I am able to be both working for and working to change it at the same time.

The most obvious example of this with/against position is my blog on academic writing and research education. I started *patter* (patthomson.net) in July 2011. At the time the university marketing team hadn't cottoned onto blogs, and it was easy for me to set up on a commercial platform, with no institutional affiliation. To begin with, the posts were simply a way to write about the kinds of things I found myself talking to doctoral researchers about. These were often issues that weren't in the academic writing and method books. They weren't big picture. They were often about detail. Most posts fell into the category of the game—the 'secret academic business', the unwritten rules of the academy that early career scholars are expected to pick up simply through immersion in the mores of scholarly/disciplinary culture(s).

Over time, and in ways that are still somewhat mysterious to me, the blog has grown. I've managed, with the help of a few guest posts, to post twice a week, without running out of things to say. The blog has had well over two million views and has over 17,000 followers. This is by no means remarkable for an academic blog, but it is nevertheless at the numeric level that is noticed by university people who care about such matters. I have recently been asked, on several occasions, why I don't switch over to the university blogging platform. 'Not interested', I say muttering to myself about the dead hand of university marketing, 'I like to control how the blog looks and what goes on it'. In saying this, I position the university as able to enjoy some reflected credit for something I do but having no direct control. As long as I stay within the bounds of what might be considered to be 'professional' conduct, the university has no reason to intervene. I'm simply exercising my 'academic freedom of expression' and 'right to publish' online. I contribute to a gift economy and if the university can bask in some reflected glow from that, well and good. However, my autonomous blog and URL is also a political rejection of blogging as marketing and an endorsement of social media as a scholarly pursuit.

I now give academic writing support to organisations and events that support early career researchers, as well as conduct research that I hope

might show that other ways of education are possible. I write only as much audit-friendly material as I need to. I've largely given up fretting about how and why I got to be a good girl. The individual is the social, I know, and we second wave feminists have been disposed to overachieve and overcompensate for our gender. We were socialised early to be obedient, then positioned as both disobedient but also better than 'the men'. This chapter may be the last iteration of the worry that this is a problem that can ever be resolved.

However, this is not quite the end to the story. Integral to my academic writing and publishing has also been work with others. As already mentioned, I have had a long-term partnership with Barbara Kamler focused on academic writing. I have also co-researched all the time I have been in the UK with Christine Hall, a colleague at Nottingham (Hall and Thomson 2017; Thomson and Hall 2017). While these relationships are of course different, both are collaborations that offer something very particular and special.

It is no accident that both my research and writing partners are also second wave feminists, generationally disposed to believe that there is strength in solidarity, joy in the kinds of intimacy that shared experiences can bring, and power in bringing more than one mind and body to an activity. Working together is a safety net, a way to get things done, but also an ongoing source of inspiration and support. But long-term research and writing relationships are more than simply instrumental. They require trust built on shared values, beliefs, and experiences. They bring satisfaction in joint achievement, comfort in the face of institutional unreason, moments of revelry, excitement, and mirth. They are, to be somewhat trite, shelter in the higher education storm.

When I now have to give advice to early career researchers, for good reason concerned with the need to publish, get funding, network, engage with publics and become known for something, I often focus on these two things—finding a place to speak for, speak with and speak back to the institution and finding a 'lost twin' to work with. While these two are not answers for everyone, they are perhaps strategies that resonate particularly with women who are both critical of higher education but also want to do well enough in it to do what they both need and want.

They are certainly what has allowed me to say my long good bye to the need to be good and what keeps me hanging on.

Postscript

I have found writing this auto-ethnography difficult. While I have explicitly used pieces of my own experience in other writing, I have never actually made myself the subject of a paper. I am acutely aware of the critique of auto-ethnography as narcissistic, ultimately an assumption by the researcher that readers will find them interesting (e.g. Delamont 2007). Auto-ethnography is accused of a homogenising feminism that ignores minority lives (e.g. Ty and Verduyn 2008). It perpetuates a notion of a singular unitary self (Done 2013). At the same time, there is also a strong feminist support for the tradition of women's diaries and autobiographies that show the social importance of the everyday and personal (David 2016).

I seem to be concluding that auto-ethnographic writing has been an interesting experiment, but probably one of a kind. I am heartened that other women of my age, seniority, and privilege find that they too are at the point of making the decision to do what they fancy and stop worrying about what they think this is right and proper. I am perhaps therefore not the only good girl ceasing to fret quite so much... And perhaps I would not have clarified this if I had not written to find out that that's what I think.

Good girl? Well yes. Well no. Well and good.

Notes

1. A school that caters for 5 year olds (K) to 18 year olds (Year 12).
2. Teacher educators are generally employed for their recent school experience. Many complete a PhD while they are teaching at a university. Some begin and don't finish. The organisation and requirements of teacher education make it difficult to build a research and publication profile.

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On the Thresholds of Legitimacy: A Collaborative Exploration of Being and Becoming Academic

Susanne Gannon, Sarah Powell, and Clare Power

The methodology that we use, collective biography, brings together a group of researchers around a topic of shared interest to generate and interrogate specific memories of lived experience in terms of the rationalities and discursive resources through which experiences come to make ‘sense’ and how we might understand them otherwise. Various collective biography projects have examined gendered subjectivities, discourse and material and affective spaces within a post-structuralist paradigm (Davies and Gannon 2006, 2009, 2012), and most recently women’s experiences in the neoliberal university (Charteris et al. 2016a, b; Gannon et al. 2015; O’Connor et al. 2015). In its collaborative processes, collective biography provides a feminist critique of the individualism and competition of neoliberal subjectivities and destabilises the privatisation of research outputs in academic capitalism (Gannon et al. 2015; Wyatt et al. 2017).

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© The Author(s) 2018
Y. Taylor, K. Lahad (eds.), *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University*, Palgrave
Studies in Gender and Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64224-6_12

Introduction

For this chapter, the authors, who although we were in the same faculty had not previously worked together, met to explore and problematise our contingent and precarious senses of academic legitimacy. The stories that we share in this chapter, those that emerged during our discussions of our somewhat unstable academic identities, pivot around the PhD as a marker of legitimacy. Our focus on the PhD invites attention to the ‘hinterlands’ where emerging academic subjectivities collide with other modes of subjectivity, involving families, friendships, and other professional identities (Mewburn 2011). In the second half of the chapter, we present three memory stories from points within our doctoral ‘journeys’, though rather than assuming any linearity we recognise the ‘unruly’ nature of the PhD experience (Peabody 2014). We each began as ‘unruly’ doctoral students—women with families and other obligations and priorities, already established full-time careers and professional identities, and we were a little or significantly older than the standard profile of the young bright graduate student who is directed towards the ‘tenure-track’ academic pathway. We organise our stories chronologically, from the moment when one woman decides to enrol in a PhD, through moments of PhD conferral and award, to a confrontation with tenuous post-PhD academic employment.

Although precarity, instability, and questions of legitimacy feature in memories of our PhD experiences, it is important to note that during the ten months after we gathered for our initial workshop in early February through to our finalised chapter in late November, the affective and material fallout of academic work was repeatedly reinforced for us by volatile conditions within our own university. In those ten months, one of us was made redundant through a process of ‘organisational change’ and ‘disestablishment’ of particular positions, and one moved from a tenuous administrative position to a project-specific funded research contract. Another one of us was pushed towards a voluntary early retirement scheme deployed by the university to slash salaries and remove underperforming staff, with eligibility determined by age, and an undisclosed formula derived from external income generated, publications, and

supervision of doctoral completions. Several of us actively sought positions elsewhere, with one of us succeeding and one not. Although we all have PhDs, have worked for years in universities, taught and taken on leadership responsibilities in many different courses in our faculties, and published books and academic papers, only one of us has tenure, and current university practices seemed designed to reinforce the insecurity of all forms of employment contract. Additionally, although networking and research dissemination are crucial to developing academic profiles, during this ten months permission was refused to present at a conference when the supervisor deemed that the focus did not meet core objectives or KPIs. We know that diligence and institutional loyalty are insufficient to counter a pervasive sense of anxiety about employment status, and an inclination to feel isolated in our vulnerability.

Writing this chapter has also been, inevitably, an erratic and interrupted process as competing demands and limited time have pressed on each of us. In many ways, ‘feeling academic’ means feeling nervous, feeling exhausted, feeling inadequate, and operating in a competitive and individualistic milieu. Furthermore, despite the lingering presence of a unionised workforce, the sense of collectivity that once inhered in such organisations is at risk of disappearing as membership declines. Whilst these notes from the present do not directly impact on the memories explored in the second section of this chapter, they are part of the context within which we have endeavoured to find the time and commitment to interrogate the narratives that we first shared about our singular senses of vulnerability and (il)legitimacy as academics. Before turning to the stories in particular, we sketch out issues of academic legitimacy and the methodology of collective biography.

Academic Legitimacy

The particular ‘stages’ of becoming academic, upon which we focus in this chapter—the circuitous pathway from beginning and completing a PhD to securing employment—have been explored by many feminist scholars. There is broad agreement that the stakes for women, albeit always complicated by intersections with categories of identity including

class, race, age, location, type of university, and degree, may be higher and exacerbated by the neoliberal managerial practices of contemporary universities. UK scholars argue that despite claims of feminisation of the sector there is a 'vicious cycle' of domination of senior roles by men (David 2014, p. 3) and suggest that within neoliberal audit cultures 'misogyny poses as measurement' (Morley 2011). Scholars in Australia also suggest that Australian universities are characterised by 'masculinised' cultures requiring highly competitive, rather than collegial practices, and favouring quantitative outputs such as grants and publications (Wilson et al. 2010).

Studies that focus specifically on the PhD experience suggest that the pathway to academia is particularly 'slippery' for women. In a comprehensive Australian study, Dever et al. (2008) found that women PhD scholars were much more likely to complete their doctorates as solo projects motivated by individual interest and personal satisfaction and had significantly less support from their supervisors in areas directly related to academic careers including publications, funding, presenting at conferences, networking, building professional relationships, and engaging with professional communities. Juggling competing demands and negotiating blurred role differentiation contribute significantly to the stress and attrition experienced by women PhD candidates (Brown & Watson 2010). Carter et al. (2013) suggest that when women encounter struggles during their candidature it is 'not uncommon for family and friends to advise them to quit' (p. 347). Furthermore, the transformation to 'academic-expert' can create complex identity challenges both for the candidate and her relationships (Carter et al. 2013). For example, the development of agency and identity still tends to occur within gendered discourses whereby women candidates may diminish their achievements to mitigate cultural perspectives of selfishness. Abetz (2016) discusses the competing relational and cultural discourses that can see married women candidates struggling to reconcile career ambition and achievement with their personal spheres.

The notion of 'academicity' is explored by Petersen (2007) in terms of how one comes 'to know how to act, speak, think, being, come into existence' as an academic or how one acquires 'academichood' (p. 477). Whilst this is synonymous with 'holding a university position' (p. 477),

academic subjectivity is discursively constituted. The PhD is crucial to the process of becoming legitimised as the autonomous, rational, intellectual subject of academia (Petersen 2008). The formation of this identity is problematic, negotiated in a range of ways and lived out in an environment of uncertainty and competition. Such uncertainty is not simply experienced by casual academics and PhD students whose futures remain in a state of flux, but by academics who have reached the sought-after, permanent university position. Charteris et al. (2016a, b) discuss a variety of contexts and ways of 'becoming academic' as well as the tension between resisting and fulfilling such a role, a concept theorised as category boundary work (Petersen 2007), which is an ongoing process of maintaining, negotiating, and challenging the boundaries that produce the academic (Charteris et al. 2016a, b). Despite such variety and complexity, the legitimate academic, according to Petersen (2007), is only truly recognisable as an academic by adhering to those things consistent with the academic discourse; if they sit outside the boundaries of the category of academic, they 'would simply not be recognised as a legitimate subject' (p. 478). Whilst the practical manifestation of 'being academic' or 'doing academic' varies between individuals, the discourse remains somewhat immutable, and one with little or no room for the casual academic or the PhD student (current or new graduate). They exist at the threshold, dwelling on the fringes of legitimate academic identity. Petersen argues that academic identity is formed through adherence to these discursive parameters, where an academic continually develops and reorganises 'self' around and within these boundaries. Stepping outside the discourse results in what Davies (1989, 1993) describes as 'category-maintenance', where an individual 'has to be told they have got it wrong [or] when the operative category's boundaries are being pushed or troubled' (cited in Petersen 2007, p. 480). Such discursive relations for the academic produce a range of pressures and performance anxieties, contributing to the questioning of academic legitimacy.

For the neoliberal university, academic subjects are readily substitutable as their use-value lies in their capacity to produce the commodities that count in the particular policy contexts of the moment. In our university, and Australia broadly, these are the body counts of enrolled and completing undergraduate and postgraduate students, the dollar income

of external funding brought in via consultancies and research grants, and the publication ‘points’ that can be counted per academic in highly ranked journals. Indeed, rankings are everything as the university touts its position in Times Higher Education World University Rankings, Leiden Rankings, Shanghai index, QS rankings, lists of top 500, top 50 under 50 years old, and so on, in banners on university webpages and promotional materials. At the same time, contemporary universities tend to ‘repress, commodify, or co-opt emotional and affective labour’ (Gannon et al. 2015, p. 189). Economic rationalities predominate, and those aspects of academic labour that are not amenable to measurement fade from sight. Academic identities or subjectivities and broad issues such as loyalty and well-being are entirely irrelevant distractions.

Collective Biography

The research methodology of collective biography in many ways counters the individualising and competitive practices of the neoliberal university, and its inherent disinterest in the bodies and affective dimensions of academic labour (Davies & Gannon 2006, 2009; Wyatt et al. 2017). Collective biography entails a group of researchers collaborating over time to examine the social and discursive resources through which they take themselves up as coherent subjects. Their own memories become resources to investigate processes of subjectification and socialisation, thus refusing conventional research bifurcations of subject/object and researcher/participant. Memories generated in response to an agreed prompt are elaborated, interrogated, and explored through careful listening, experiential and theoretical lenses, and through an extended process of writing together (Davies & Gannon 2006, 2009, 2012; Gonick & Gannon 2014). Inspired by the collective memory work of Marxist feminist sociologist Frigga Haug and her collaborators in Germany (1987), the development of collective biography as an explicitly post-structural method has brought attention to subjectivity, discourse, and the capillary operations of power. In particular it has been useful to ‘bring theory into collision with everyday life’ (Davies & Gannon 2006, p. 4). As a distinctly feminist methodology, it foregrounds embodied experience and

the discursive, material, and affective frames through which sense is made. The memory stories that are shared are not positioned as naïve realist tales, or incontestable truths, but as potent moments of entanglement where bodies, feelings, histories, potentialities, rationalities, and objects come together and are collectively investigated for gaps, contradictions, or ‘perturbations’ (Charteris et al. 2016a). The intention of the researchers is not to resolve these moments of incommensurability but rather to open them for examination.

Collective biography has been a protean and productive mode of inquiry for researchers exploring theoretical complexities and lived experience across many areas of interest. Recently, collectives have turned their inquiries towards academic labour in neoliberal universities to examine the affective and gendered dimensions of this work (Charteris et al. 2016a, b; Kern et al. 2014; Gannon et al. 2015; Hartung et al. 2017; O’Connor et al. 2015). This chapter fits into the trajectory of these inquiries and adds a particular line of inquiry focusing on the PhD as *entrée* into academic employment.

Whilst a collective biography may be fruitfully developed through meetings over extended periods of time, across months or years, as with Haug and her colleagues (1987), or in intensive retreats away from institutional structures, as with Davies, Gannon, and colleagues (2006), the frenetic and demanding pace of our academic lives dictated our process. Susanne sent out a general call through the School of Education for people interested in collectively interrogating academic identities, and the focus turned towards the transition to ‘academicity’ through the doctorate. Although more people initially expressed interest, we settled into a group of four women who participated in two half-day workshops on campus. Three participants agreed to work together towards a co-authored paper drawing on the stories that were generated during, between, and after our workshops, as ‘data’. Notably, our processes of selecting, telling, listening to, and writing stories of academic life were iterative and extended beyond the confines of the workshops. Between and after our workshops, even through the writing of this paper, the memory stories demonstrated their mutable quality. Rather than fixing our ‘data’ as the definitive version of a memory produced in the precise time and place of the workshops, in this chapter we have acknowledged continuing

entanglements of bodies, theories, affects, and memories that call for subtleties, variations, and substitutions where these attune better to our emerging understandings.

Our emergent process is consistent with other collective biographies. For example, Hartung and her colleagues (2017) candidly note that, although they anticipated following a series of methodological steps, ‘the enactment of these steps was far “messier” than could have been anticipated’, and the final form of their memories—poetic vignettes condensed from lengthy narratives—was also unanticipated (p. 47). Collective biography is a ‘highly elastic methodology’ that is reinvented within each collective of researchers and writers (Gonick & Gannon 2014, p. 7). With our interests in academic subjectivities in contemporary universities, and our modes of working together constrained by the work intensification and precarity that characterise them, we reinvented our processes over time to suit our conditions. In the following section of the chapter, we present three of the stories from our workshop—organised chronologically—and analyses of these stories. As these texts are short narrative vignettes of experience, we approach them as data somewhat laterally, recognising that they are crafted accounts of experience. We attend to themes, tropes, motifs, metaphor, narrative logic, dialogue, and points of view—recognising the value of an analytical toolkit that draws from literary as well as sociological domains.

Approaching a text as data that provides insights into subjective experiences and feelings is a familiar analytical mode. In collective biography, however, researchers are just as interested in ‘unravelling’ (Charteris et al. 2016a) and interrogating the discourses and rationalities through which accounts of experience make sense. Researchers aim to provoke ‘mo(ve)ment’—where close analysis of particular moments of being through narrative vignettes of experience might also provoke shifts in thinking about those moments and how we understand them (Davies & Gannon 2006). Originally, Haug et al. (1987) recommended that memory workers write in the third person to maximise distance and objectivity; however, this can seem contrived, and we are more interested in how the narratives unfold in each workshop. Each of these stories is written and told in the first person, brought into collective space through storytelling, listening, discussing, writing, reading, rewriting, analysing, and

delving into pertinent literature. Do the stories we tell about these moments of being and becoming academic change as a result of this process? Perhaps.

Memory Stories

Our first story is set at the very beginning of the PhD experience, the moment when one of the authors realised its possibility. This takes place at a precise moment and in the company of her academic mentor, a well-known feminist educator. As in each of the three stories, the body and emotions are central to the author's experience of being woman and of becoming academic. In this instance, entry into a PhD is a flight from elsewhere, from problems in her current professional life.

Story 1: Why don't you do a PhD?

After I graduate from my Masters my supervisor says, 'Why don't you do a PhD?' We're walking along the beach near her house, looking over to the island. It's hard to keep up with her long strides. She continues, 'You hate your job.' 'No,' I stop. 'I hate my boss', I say, but I think to myself, she hates me. Is escape a reason to do a PhD?

I wouldn't want to be an academic. Ever. The ones I've met are old and fusty, or the ones more like me cry when I ask them if they love their jobs. This professor—barefoot on the sand ahead of me, her strong legs marching her towards the rocks—is different. But my Principal had said, when I told her I'd finished my Masters thesis, 'Perhaps you belong in the university, not in my school.'

This afternoon, walking on the wild beach, trying to keep up with the Professor, I thought maybe I could. Maybe I did. She explains to me that there are scholarships, that I could keep paying my mortgage if I got one, that I could even extend the research in my Masters. My ankles are in the surf now, water swirling around them as the tide turns, the sand shifting and slipping under the soles of my feet. It's just filling in a form, I think. Why not?

Ironically, starting a PhD is represented in this first story by 'just filling in a form', as a low-stakes minimal investment rather than a life-changing decision. In terms of academic subjectivities, the narrator of the story evokes three kinds of academics and measures her desires and her sense of

her own subjectivity against them. There is a clear binary division between those who are ‘old and fusty’ and those ‘who cry when I ask them if they love their jobs’. In associating herself more closely with those who cry, one reading might suggest that she acknowledges the importance of the affective or emotional dimensions of work (Charteris et al. 2016a, b). ‘Love’ also links back to the opening paragraph where ‘hate’ as the opposite of love characterises the current workplace. In a literary sense, approaching the memory as a text and focusing on how academic subjects are represented in that text provides different insights. These two categories of academics operate as crude and oversimplified tropes or figures within the narrative, each trivialised by easily dismissed and ill-defined characteristics (‘fusty’) or behaviours (crying). They are not realised as recognisable or discrete subjects within the text but used rhetorically like ‘straw men’—evoked only to be dismissed. The third possibility for academic subjectivity is the distinct, embodied figure of ‘this Professor’. The Professor is strong and fast, moving powerfully in the world, and in command of pragmatic as well as more esoteric knowledge. Despite her inclination towards those who ‘cry’, this seems to be the sort of academic subject that the narrator desires and to which she aspires. Although it is not overtly stated in the memory story, the staccato rhythm of the truncated clauses ‘maybe I could. Maybe I did’ (referring respectively to ‘keep up’ and ‘belong in the university’) gestures towards all sorts of possibilities. ‘Belonging’ in the university seems to be contingent on being this sort of academic subject.

In this narrative, being and belonging *in* the university is strangely dislocated *from* the university as an institutional site. As Charteris et al. (2016a) map in their study of how bodies, affects, and relations are ‘knotted’ together in academic times and places, university campuses, buildings, and offices have particular affordances, hierarchies, and blockages. How can it be that the ideal academic subject is one who ‘strides’ through entirely different landscapes—away from all institutional and built spaces? Academic possibilities emerge here on a ‘wild beach’, and the narrative pushes this materially and metaphorically into the littoral zone of turning tides and shifting sands. In contrast to the desire for solid ‘footholds on the slippery paths of academia’, expressed by Wilson and her colleagues (2010, p. 535), in this story the narrator describes the instability

under her feet with the verbs 'swirling,' 'shifting,' and 'slipping' as more exciting than dangerous. There is no sense of vulnerability or risk in this account. Nevertheless, the narrative comes quickly to a close with the more banal image of the 'form' that needs to be completed to start the process of enrolling in the PhD.

If the story is approached critically from other perspectives, it is apparent that the hard facts of neoliberal university practices are missing. PhD students are woven in to the fabric of audit processes with direct benefits for academics. The value of the Professor to the university, and the value of her own reputation, increases as she attracts PhD students who each have a government-funded premium attached to them. In this memory, of course the potential PhD student is ignorant of such matters, and there is no sense that the Professor has any interest or investment in neoliberal academic accounting. The story is more evocative of a feminist epistemology of freedoms and possibilities, relations and connections, where more powerful and experienced women assist other women to make their way into academic worlds. Legitimacy, however, is conferred by the Professor with her suggestion that the narrator is capable of a PhD, at the same time as it seems to be withdrawn by the Principal who is her current boss. This flight from school to academia is simultaneously capitulation and invitation.

It is important to note that this first story of academic subjectivity is written from a stance of naivety. This narrator is not yet an academic subject, not even enrolled in a PhD. So far she is only fantasising about the possibility, regardless of the provisional legitimacy conferred by the Professor's suggestion. The two stories that follow emerge from contrasting perspectives of academic subjects who have moved further down the road to academia.

Story 2: What is it like to have finished your PhD?

Our second story moves straight to the end of the PhD. This narrator has earned the title of Dr, through long, hard, intellectual labour. She seems reluctant, however, to own this title in the company of her non-academic friends. Her story viscerally conveys her discomfort and suggests tension between embodied subjectivity and the cold authority of the title 'Doctor'.

It was late; close to midnight. We were sitting cosily together on the couch, near the fire, and had talked and laughed about the DVD we'd just watched, and although we were all yawning, no-one made any moves towards heading home.

That is until Emma asked me what it is like to have finished my PhD. I felt my chest tighten, my mind disengage and I started to move off the couch. I gave my standard reply which, although perhaps I craft it slightly differently each time, was that I'm enjoying having weekends again and re-learning to say 'yes' to invitations and opportunities. Then, as usual, I recounted a short anecdote about an interaction with friends when I'd caught myself automatically saying 'no' to going to the pub after a game of tennis then realising that now I could say 'yes'. 'Do you get paid more now?' Helen asked. I didn't have to think about this; I have a standard response for this question as well. 'I did the PhD because it was contingent on getting a promotion, so no, I don't get paid more'.

By this time I had extricated myself from the snug group and moved to the coat rack where I put on my jacket. 'Well, shall we call you Dr now?'; Robin asked. My third standard response came immediately: 'No, no ... I even find it hard to say that myself at work'. I was now clearing the glasses from the table and moving into the kitchen. I felt a rigidity in my body, I wasn't making eye contact with anyone, the cheeriness in my voice sounded forced.

I had disconnected from myself, and felt, again, a sense of self-betrayal. My friends were giving me space to talk about my PhD, but once again I devalued and diminished it and myself, so that instead of leaving a lovely evening with a light heart, I slunk out and berated myself as I walked home.

The PhD in this narrative is again associated with the body. Mention of it causes particular embodied reactions. Her chest tightens, she describes 'rigidity' in her body, and she avoids eye contact. There is a dissociation of self from body, and the narrator's mind is 'disengaged'. She hears the tone of her voice as if from outside, 'forced', and she says she has disconnected from herself. She hears herself repeatedly giving 'standard' and well-rehearsed replies to their well-intentioned enquiries. The question 'What is it like...?' triggers her to move away from the sofa and the 'snug group' from whom she now feels separated. The yawning, laughing ease of the group watching a movie together is no longer accessible to the

narrator, as she moves over to the coat rack and clears glasses away. But the questions keep coming. In fact, the narrative structure of the account is punctuated by questions directed at her by different people. Between the opening paragraph which sets the scene, 'close to midnight', and the final sentence when she goes out into the night and walks home alone, there are three short episodes of interaction provoked by these three questions. The first question from Emma is paraphrased by the narrator as 'what is it like to have finished my PhD', but the next two questions are reported as though verbatim. Helen asks: 'Do you get paid more?' and then Robin asks, 'Well, shall we call you Dr... now?' In the story, the questions are followed by a brief account of the interaction it provokes. Each of them is followed by a 'standard' or 'rehearsed' response and one that she 'didn't have to think about'. This suggests that these are all questions she has heard before and are responses that are not predicated on reflection.

The liminal zones between self as friend and neighbour and self as successful PhD candidate and academic have not yet been negotiated by the narrator. Her friends' questions can be interpreted variously, but suggest some curiosity about her transitioning phase from PhD candidate to Dr. The narrator's stance of abjection and self-blame reflects the relational conflicts experienced by women PhD scholars, who struggle to negotiate their multiple identities (Abetz 2016). She is simultaneously agentic, in that she is the one who seems to make all the moves away from the others, and she is self-excluding. She separates herself from the 'sitting cosily together', she 'extricates' herself, she 'slinks' out the door, and as she does, she 'berates' herself. She summarises the whole night, and gestures towards other similar nights, with 'once again I devalued and diminished it (the PhD) and myself'. The final question offers a sort of legitimacy by conferring the title of 'Dr', but in effect this is a strategy that the narrator seems to experience as a de-legitimation of herself as a subject within this social milieu. The unresolved tensions between 'the desire to be a "normal" woman in one's social community' (Carter et al. 2013, p. 345) and to acknowledge her multiple identities seem embodied in the narrator's disconnection from herself. This then restricts her access to what would be more authentic responses. The tension in this story lies in whether or not the narrator can belong to her friendship group at the

same time as officially ‘belonging’ to academia as a PhD graduate. This resonates with the Principal’s comment in the first story that the narrator belongs in a university and not the school. In this story, her two worlds do not integrate, they are kept apart, and the narrator feels somewhat misplaced in both of them.

Work and leisure appear throughout the story. It records the range of non-academic activities and locations in the narrator’s life: weekends, tennis, the pub, movies at people’s houses. The story reveals that she already works at a university, that this was the express motivation for the PhD, that her promotion was contingent on its completion. However, as the literature on managerialism in academia consistently reports, contingency and precarity of employment are ubiquitous in the neoliberal university. This is intensified for women and for mature-age new graduates (Wilson et al. 2010). The assumptions of the friends about salary, conditions, and status that might be attached to the PhD are misplaced and suggest that they are not aware of universities as workplaces. Such assumptions are not addressed by the narrator, which can only perpetuate the common misconceptions of broad academic freedoms and privileges. The final story in this paper turns directly to the employment conditions for the new graduate.

Story 3: Finally!

The final story is economical, poetic, a series of brief images, sounds, and emotions that cohere around the moment that a research-oriented academic position is offered to the narrator. In our analysis of the story, more details of context swirled in and around it as the moment became a pivot for fragments of other memories and associations. This story and its analysis highlight the place and integral role of the body and emotions in the experience of being woman. It depicts the ongoing tension between the private domains of family and personal life and the more public arena of being and becoming academic woman. Despite successful completion of a PhD, this narrator had not yet found ongoing intellectual work until this moment.

Knock at the door,

We walk to her office

The corridor gloomy and long, the silence broken only by the flick, flick of my shoes,

*Door closes behind us,
Face to face I wait, surely can she hear my heart thudding in my chest,
She makes her offer, obviously knowing what the effect will be,
And she's right, I am stunned, delighted,
Finally!
My body floods with relief, I feel shaky,
Then my body remembers to do all the right things and I feel okay
More than okay...*

Two ideas emerge when analysing this poeticised memory story. The first is the physical, located, and, simultaneously, metaphorical nature of the experience. The second is the embodied nature of the experience, depicted in memories of the moment (also reminiscent of older memories). At the time of writing, the narrator held a casual position as an administrative officer. Her office (not really hers, it was pointed out) sat at the end of a long corridor, an antipodal demarcation between professional staff and academic staff. The silent walk down the 'gloomy and long corridor' indicates the physical distance separating the reality and the ideal. The metaphorical distance is obvious: Despite completing her doctorate, despite accumulating teaching experience and research assistant experience, despite the publication of peer-reviewed journal articles, she occupies an administrative role, and the desired academic position remains elusive, out of reach. The distance between the two is filled with growing self-doubt and feelings of non-legitimacy. Charteris et al. (2016a) discuss a similar experience and an 'unravelling' (p. 37) of confidence. They identify the optimism associated with the promise of a job at the end of the doctoral path only to be met with the injustice of it being given to someone else. They discuss the casual academic putting in the extra effort, for little or no pay, hoping this will pay off. The decline in confidence mentioned by Charteris et al. corresponds with the narrator's own experience. This brief story swirls around with more details of the context and the history that it brought to this potent moment. Positions and opportunities are offered around her and yet none are offered to her. Apparently she is invisible. A young, male postdoc suddenly appears—where/when was this position advertised? (Was it advertised at all?) The old, worn-out story of male vs. female is rampant, still causing havoc for

the woman trying to make her mark in a world that remains more accessible to the man than the woman, a phenomenon widely reported in the literature (David 2014; Dever et al. 2008). Women continue to be employed in less secure, short-term working arrangements. This is exacerbated for those women who are also mothers and also single. Being woman and being a mother appears to significantly hinder the establishment of an academic career, but perhaps even more destructive is the way this morphs into non-legitimacy.

The complexity of the discourse(s) surrounding female singlehood fuels a sense of being 'illegitimate', and despite the progress of feminist thought and action, practices continue to 'reinforce highly traditional and conventional norms of femininity' (Lahad 2014, p. 241). The children are not mentioned in this narrative, but as our introduction suggests, they are ghosts in the working lives of many academic women. Charteris et al. (2016a) note the place of pregnancy and motherhood experienced by many women during their doctoral study. As the mother of three, this author recalls the assignments written with a baby at her breast, the presentations formulated in her mind as she prepares yet another meal, changes another nappy, soothes a crying child. Is academic legitimacy simply a question of gender? Is the man legitimate because his focus is his work (traditionally and generally speaking)? Does the woman grapple with academic integrity simply because she does 'academic' differently? Does having children equate to being less competent, less able to fit into the academic machine? Dever et al. (2008) found that the considerable disparity between the earnings of male and female PhD graduates was directly related to the 'impact of interruptions to employment or education to look after home and family' (p. iii) where 'uninterrupted educational history from undergraduate training to postgraduate training is associated with better earnings' (p. iii). Still the gap remains. In the narrative, as she walks her non-shoes question her legitimacy, scream her inadequacy. Her current status is vindicated, betrayed by her thongs. The 'flick flick' of her 'flip flops' (colloquially 'thongs' in Australia) echoes around her, in and out, back and forth. She thinks, *Real academics do not wear thongs*. She remains non-academic, non-real, woman, mother. How can these positions be simultaneously occupied? As the physical door closes behind her, the metaphorical one does the same. She can sense the door

closing on what was and, at the same time, it is opening up something new. A cruel optimism (Berlant 2011, cited in Charteris et al. 2016a, p. 7) continues to sustain the chase and to sustain the uncertainty.

Entangled with this is the embodied response to such experiences. Her body takes over at this moment. She has learned to trust her body to respond the way it needs to and to communicate this with her; she has come to rely on such physically powerful responses. Yet it seems that this has very little academic credence. What follows are a variety of physical realities: a 'face-to-face' encounter, a 'thudding' chest, a body 'remembering' what to do. It is the body that assures her that things will be okay, 'more than okay'. These are events experienced in the body, happenings that support understanding, corporeal actualities that require a trust in the embodied reality of human response.

Concluding Remarks

As feminists contemplating our narratives as moments within our ongoing engagement with the academy, we locate the stories within dynamic processes inscribed with power and influenced by a plurality of intersecting factors. As such, it is a political act to collectively consider the hegemonic relations that shape our context and our experiences. The impact of these relations is experienced through body and emotion, and they are given form and validation through the process of sharing our experiences. Rather than existing as isolated individuals, together we identify and articulate the patterns that weave in and out and between our experiences. In so doing we expand conceptions of academicity, by offering new perspectives and disrupting this space.

In this chapter we have explored feminist engagements with the academic becomings associated with the completion of a PhD and what this promises and have expanded the conceptions of what it means to be and become an academic. Collectively we have generated and interrogated three memory stories. We have explored their assumptions, rationalities, discursive framings, metaphors, and the narrative conventions that they draw upon and subvert. Our close readings of these texts are informed by literature about academic formations, identities, 'academicity', and the

ambivalent experiences of women who seek to enter and secure employment in the competitive contexts of neoliberal universities. The first narrative explored the excitement of the possibility of a PhD with a trusted and powerful Professor conferring provisional legitimacy on the promising student. The PhD, however, is also a flight from a workplace where legitimacy has become tenuous, compromised by another powerful woman. The second narrative explores the ambivalent feelings of being awarded a PhD, which at the same time as it confers legitimacy on the author as an academic subject also separates her from her non-academic friends and social milieu. The final narrative examines the potent moment when an elusive academic position is finally offered to the precarious worker, exploring how this deeply embodied moment resonates with other moments of tenuous academic legitimacy. The stories highlight tensions between masculinised and hierarchical discourses and academic structures and feminist engagements with affective and embodied knowledge.

Our collective biography methodology suggests that working collaboratively with memories of embodied experience can be a counterpoint to the practices of separation and competition that characterise the neoliberal university. Our experiences resonate with those of other feminist scholars writing about the masculinised, highly competitive, and highly demanding academic cultures. We share the challenges of reconciling the private and public domains and moving beyond dwelling on the fringes of academicity. Amongst this, however, we have experienced brief and precious moments of joy, possibility, and deep, embodied pleasure. Whilst endeavouring to be inclusive, the practices we used to generate our chapter, and our chosen methodology, were inadvertently exclusionary (Gannon et al. 2015). Deadlines to be met, competing obligations, and ongoing distractions meant that only three of the initial group followed through to write this paper. Despite these compromises, working in this way may be a step towards 'a new collective imaginary of academia' (2015, p. 189). Our insights cannot be generalised and are not intended to apply to diverse contexts or subjects, but they do help us navigate the discursive intricacies and contradictions of everyday moments and experiences. They help us understand and develop legitimate academic identities in the variety of forms these may take in the precarious environment of academia.

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Crying on Campus

Daphna Hacker

Introduction

Crying is one of the most gendered emotional expressions. Women are generally allowed to shed a tear or weep openly and might even be rewarded for such praxis as it symbolizes their acceptance of the model connecting femininity to emotionality and vulnerability. Men, on the other hand, are expected to hold back their tears, fulfilling the common expectations related to masculinity that they be rational and emotionally tough. A man who exposes his unrestrained watering eyes in front of others is risking social ridicule as being ‘sissy’ (Fischer et al. 2013). Hence,

I thank Kinneret Lahad and Yvette Taylor for initiating this important volume and for bringing into the light what the academic hegemonic patriarchy would rather leave in the dark. I am grateful to all the colleagues and students who shared with me their ‘crying on campus’ stories and thus normalized and contextualized mine. I thank Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, Menachem Mautner, Yofi Tirosh, Yifat Monnickendam, and Miri Rozmarin, for their comments on previous drafts. Finally, I thank Daniel Findler and Yuval Carny for their research assistance.

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crying acts as a gendering border that reinforces common patriarchal perceptions of hierarchal essentialist differences between the sexes. Notwithstanding, this gendering border acts differently in different spheres. In the academic sphere, on which this essay centers, there is very little room for crying. Here, men and women alike must perform according to masculine standards if they are to fulfill the role of scholars employed by a university (Bellas 1999). These standards are based on a hierarchal mind–body dichotomy that places pure rationality as the ideal and demands self-control and emotional distance—which do not correlate well with the messy business of unrepressed tears.

Since 2005 I have enjoyed a joint nomination, split 50–50 between the Law Faculty and the Gender Studies Program (situated within the Faculty of Humanities) at Tel Aviv University (TAU). I endeavor to successfully maneuver between two distinct realms: on the one hand, a male-dominated, high-status Faculty of Law and, on the other hand, a very small and marginalized female-dominated gender program that strives, with its meager resources, to practice feminism and not only teach it. I have been privileged with tenure since 2010 and was recently promoted to the level of an associate professor, hence no doubt I know how to play according to the academic rules and accept them through my professional praxis. Still, as a feminist, I am simultaneously painfully aware of the patriarchal characteristics of the academic sphere and in constant internal and external discussions over the meaning of an aspired-to-humane and feminist academia.

In this essay, I will explore four occasions on which I breached the masculine anti-crying norm on campus at TAU: during a meeting with the Dean of the Law Faculty, during a phone conversation with Human Resources, during class in an MA gender course I conducted, and after reading an email telling me that a dear colleague from the School of Social Work had passed away. Through reflective autoethnography of these brief crying episodes, enriched by conversations I later conducted with those who witnessed my tears, and several ‘crying on campus’ stories I received from others, I strive to demonstrate the effectiveness of using crying as a *litmus test* for a humane and feminist academia. That is, I offer crying (including its acceptability or unacceptability) as a useful and normative methodology to explore and judge the academic field from a

feminist perceptive. In particular, I will use these crying episodes to explore: (1) the costs of the tension between the perception of academia as a sphere of pure scholarship that is superior to economic calculations and bureaucracy, and the actual lived university, which is a neoliberal employer like many others; (2) the question of feminist pedagogy and the scope for feelings in professor–student relations; and (3) the importance to female researchers of mutual feminist bonding.

Crying as a Social Construct

Crying is a distinctively human act. According to current scientific knowledge, humans are the only animals that shed tears in response to emotional triggers (Vingerhoets 2013; Vingerhoets and Bylsma 2016: 207). However, it is a scientifically marginalized act, barely studied in adults. As Ad Vingerhoets (2013: 2) notes, in his recent book dedicated to crying, even within the vast literature on emotions, ‘astonishingly little is known about crying’. As according to current data, all over the world, women cry between two and four times more often than men (Van Hemert et al. 2011; Vingerhoets 2013: ch. 10), for more reasons, and in more contexts (Fischer et al. 2013: 506), this scholastic lacuna is but another example of science’s phallocentrism and its neglect of what is perceived as feminine and hence unworthy of investigation.

The little data gathered on adult crying proves that this act is far from being a biological reflex-like symptom. Let us consider these questions: who cries?; when?; and how are the tears interpreted by the crying person and by her or his surroundings? Research shows that the answers are all dependent not only on age, personality, mental health, and the gender of the person who cries but also on the gender of the person who observes the crying, on the setting in which the crying takes place, and on the specific cultural understanding of crying relevant to the actors in the scenario in question (Vingerhoets and Bylsma 2016: 209). For example, a recent survey of 37 countries found, somewhat counterintuitively, that crying is positively correlated with happiness, wealth, democracy, and individualism. Hence, the researchers conclude that crying has more to do with the culturally constructed liberty to express emotions than with

the emotional distress felt by individuals. Moreover, this survey found that the gender gap vis-à-vis the propensity to cry is larger in wealthier and more individualist countries (van Hemert et al. 2011). The meaning of this counterintuitive finding is still debated and demands further research and theorization. What current data already also reveals is that while women receive more positive responses to their crying than men (at least in the Global North), both sexes can be sanctioned for crying in the workplace and be perceived as unprofessional (Fischer et al. 2013: 505–7). Indeed, as Simons et al. (2013) revealed in their recent study, while crying is commonly understood as ‘an authentic outburst of pure emotion’, people nevertheless try, though not always successfully, to ‘regulate’ their crying, for example, by stopping or enhancing it or by leaving the room so as not to be observed while crying. This self-regulation occurs, in part, because people are aware of crying’s contextual properness or improperness and of the social consequences of ‘crying improperly’.

Hence, I hold that crying is, in many cases, a social performance—a symbolic interaction embedded in cultural and institutional contexts—and should be studied as such (more generally, on feelings as embedded in social rules, see Hochschild 1979, 1983; and on emotions and symbolic interaction, see Franks 1985). Alas, current studies on crying use quantitative methods that fail to capture the sociological complexities of the phenomenon. I could not find even one contemporary study that used qualitative methods to explore crying and the complex web of social relations that grant it meaning.

In what follows, I adopt a radically different methodological approach, among other reasons, to point to the limitations of existing research on crying and to offer a new scholastic frontier for the exploration of this fascinating, yet understudied, phenomenon. I will provide autoethnographic accounts (on the methodology of autoethnography, see Ellis et al. 2011; for another example of autoethnographic accounts as a method to explore emotions on campus, see Taylor 2013) of four incidents in which I cried on campus and which left a special impression on me. I would argue that these incidents—two of which I categorize as ‘distress crying’ and two as ‘sisterhood crying’—shed light, on the one hand, on the problematic masculine characteristics of late modern universities and, on the

other hand, on the potential the universities nevertheless possess to become feminist institutions.

In an attempt to enrich my self-reflection with that of others, during August–September 2016 I conducted conversations with those who witnessed my tears, only to find that memory is even trickier than I had thought (see, also, Simons et al. 2013: 3). Hence, the crying episodes described here are not objective reports, but rather represent my subjective and partial memories, entangled with the memories and interpretations of those who were the audience to my tears.

Finally, in mid-August 2016, I published a call for ‘crying on campus’ stories on my Facebook page. I received several replies, mainly through emails, from colleagues and students from different institutions. The main insight that emerged from these responses was an important reminder of how privileged my tears are compared to the tears of those who find themselves in much less secure or powerful positions within the academic field. I refer here to those who have more distressing reasons to cry, generated by the university itself, those who cannot afford to cry on campus, those who cannot afford to openly report on their tears without fear of retaliation, and those who gain no relief or benefit from their tears. I will relate to a few of these stories to further contextualize mine.

Distress Crying

Research shows that the most common emotional trigger for crying is the feeling of powerlessness or helplessness, often in combination with sadness, anger, fear, or disappointment, and that women cry in conflict circumstances much more than men, while the latter shed tears mainly in positive circumstances (Vingerhoets and Bylsma 2016: 208–209). The first two crying stories I present here belong to this gendered ‘distress crying’ category, as I call it. They highlight some of the problematic outcomes of the dual, and somewhat contradictory, nature of universities—as a sphere of pure intellectual search for knowledge that is allegedly separated from, and superior to, the logic of commodification and as a neo-liberal bureaucratic workplace.

The first time I cried on campus was soon after I was told that my job talk had been a success and that I was to be offered a tenure-track position at TAU. I was, of course, thrilled, realizing how lucky I was to be granted entry to the intellectual heaven desired by many other talented scholars who are not so fortunate (while simultaneously aware of the persisting findings, ever since Deaux and Enswiller's pioneering 1974 study, showing that women attribute their success to luck, and men to their higher abilities). Shortly after receiving the good news, I realized I was expected to start work in February, when the second semester started, but would be paid only from April. For some mysterious bureaucratic reason I still cannot fathom, academic appointments at TAU are opened only twice a year, not always in accordance with the start date of the second semester. I thought this was unfair and exploitive (and probably illegal), and when I was called for a meeting with the Law Faculty Dean, I intended to express my reservations about this rule. If I remember correctly, and based on other occasions in which I insist on discussing money with authority, part of this decision was driven by my feminist agenda that challenges the cultural perception that women should not do 'money talk' (Barron 2003).

Little did I know that I had been invited for this meeting because the Dean was puzzled and offended by my conduct in what was probably the first faculty meeting I had attended. In that faculty meeting, the air-conditioning was on, I was cold, and so I shut it down. What I was not aware of was that, only three minutes earlier, the Dean had switched on the air-conditioning, and that unknowingly I was taking part in the infamous gender war over room temperature (Kingma and van Marken Lichtenbelt 2015). My act was interpreted by the Dean as an uncomprehend personal act of protest against him, and he decided to call me to his office to find out what was it all about. In retrospect, I am glad the Dean initiated the meeting that prevented an unspoken and unjustified grudge. But back then, I was flooded by other feelings, of displacement and powerlessness. I, who wanted to talk about the injustice of the university's expectation that I work with no pay for two months, found myself justifying my trivial air-conditioning behavior in front of my new, and offended, Dean, whom I respected and to whom I was grateful for my new position. The gap between what I thought was the major injustice

that should be discussed and what the Dean thought justified a special meeting and serious conversation, coupled with the clear power imbalance of a new faculty member and her Dean, made me cry right there and then in his office.

The Dean's response echoed perfectly the empirical findings on men's responses to crying in the workplace (Vingerhoets and Bylsma 2016: 212). He was confused and almost shocked; he had not seen it coming and had no idea how to respond in the moment. I do not remember how the meeting ended, but I will never forget the bouquet of flowers he sent me home that day. This unexpected gesture comforted me, yet left me perplexed. It was very clear that there was no articulated and accepted social script to guide the Dean in the face of my tears.

The second case of distress crying I remember took place almost ten years later. I was back on campus following spinal surgery and returned to my office to find a note from Human Resources. It informed me that more days had been deducted from my overall leave entitlement than I had actually taken. I called to find out how this had arisen and learned from the patient and knowledgeable Human Resources administrator that the university's bureaucracy based its calculations on the number of days' leave recommended by my doctor, and not on the leave I had actually used and reported—and that this was the rule in such cases. I realized I was being punished for having come to work against doctor's orders to observe a significant period of bed rest. More than the modest monetary loss (unused leave days are translated into money when a faculty member retires), I felt a symbolic punishment of unrecognized personal sacrifice on my part. I could not hold back my tears. For months I had coped with horrible back pain, struggling not to cancel any classes and to perform all other university-related tasks. I even showed up to a faculty meeting to present—while standing, because the pain did not allow me to sit—the new LL.M program I worked on as the Head of the LL.M Committee, only to be hospitalized a few days later for an immediate operation. So, in my eyes, I was performing as a good, and even heroic, academic or university citizen (on the concept of academic citizenship, see Macfarlane 2007), ignoring what my body was trying to tell me about the unhealthy consequences of the stressful way of life academics face in our era (Gillespie et al. 2001; Dua 1994). Yet, here, back at my office, instead of

receiving a thank-you note or a letter of appreciation, I am learning that the organization does not recognize my dedication, with its associated health costs, and treats me as if I took all the leave days to which my doctor certified I was entitled. In effect, I was being chastised like an employee showing no dedication (or like a parasite or a disloyal member if we want to continue the citizenship metaphor). Again, the gap between my understanding of the situation and the university's was unbearable (see, also Thwaites and Pressland 2017; Taylor 2013), and I started crying.

I tried to explain to the administrator on the other end of the line, who was baffled at my tears, how I felt. In our recent conversation, conducted for this essay, she did not recall the incident, but the record, saved in the Human Resources computer, shows that eventually a way was found to give me back the unused leave days. Interestingly, the administrator could not recall *any* incident with a crying faculty member, but could recall several stories of crying administrative staff. She explained this difference as stemming from the fact that employees in the administrative sector are much more exposed to the more demanding aspects of the university as an employer and as a bureaucratic organization. For example, their time and work are much more heavily supervised compared to the relative freedom academics enjoy on campus. Moreover, she argued, many workers in the nonacademic sector on campus have more challenging personal circumstances, low salaries that are very much depended on and less job security than that enjoyed by the academic staff. She also reminded me that, unlike within the academic sector, most of the administration personnel at the university are women. All this causes more bureaucracy-related tears, witnessed by Human Resources, than among the academic staff.

I would argue that these two stories, of my distress crying in front of the Dean and the Human Resources administrator, reflect the deep academic habitus according to which the 'ideal worker' within the academic sector, or the ideal *homo academicus* in Bourdieu's terms (Bourdieu 1984), is the one who forgets s/he is an employee. Scholars on campus are socialized into understanding it to be their intellectual home, meaning that they are not employees but members of one big intellectual family—the university is them, and they are the university. They are to feel forever grateful for the privilege of joining this elitist family, as only the fortunate

few are allowed to join, and to do all they can for it to thrive—as its flourishing is theirs. Scholars on campus rightfully celebrate their ‘academic freedom’, but erroneously adopt the belief that hence they are free. They perceive their work as superior to the market and its commodification-embedded *raison d’être* and derived practices and thus wish to believe that they are not part of it. The crying incidents happened when I experienced the clash between the academic habitus and the fact that the university is, also, an economic and bureaucratic employer. In the first incident, I wanted my employment rights to be protected, but instead met a rigid bureaucratic rule and experienced a meeting with the Dean that only enhanced my sense of unaddressed injustice. This scenario of unpaid work symbolizes the power relations that very much exist within the ‘academic family’, as well as the exploitive potential of the ‘above-the-market’ university’s self-idealization, while the Dean’s bouquet of flowers symbolizes an attempt to reestablish the familial harmonious ideal. In the second incident, I performed according to the expected image of the devoted and loyal university citizen, or ‘family member’, which I had internalized over the years. I have devoted not only my time and labor but also sacrificed my health, for the collective’s good, only to learn that I was to be treated by the bureaucratic system like any ordinary employee who would probably be happy to use the full leave entitlement.

Unlike for those employed in university administration roles, for the academic sector the institution (at least according to the model I am familiar with) is a workplace like no other. It is a complex universe of extreme hierarchical power relations coupled with community and team effort and individual freedoms, of exciting and independent labor of the mind conducted in a pressuring timeframe that must also include teaching and service provision, and of creative and innovative intellectual products that cannot and should not be reduced to an economic price tag, but which nevertheless exist within the employment relations of an organization that must sustain itself economically, and that increasingly uses statistical impact factors to judge its members’ performance.

My tears in the two incidents described here are relatively mild, almost trivial. Luckily, I never had to cry because I was fired after being refused tenure, or because I was sexually harassed by a senior professor, or because a colleague stole an idea of mine—all horrors I learned of during my years

on campus, but never experienced myself. Yet, I understand my two non-dramatic distress crying episodes as important reminders of the urgent need to openly discussing the complexity of the academic universe, and not ‘forgetting’ that the university is also an employer. Ignoring the labor relations of which scholars are a part is wrong for at least two reasons: one, they are there, so academics must cope with their existence and meaning; second, they can protect academics from the abusive potential of the ‘altruistic academic’ habitus, which expects complete devotion at the expense of health, personal relations, and leisure time. What I am suggesting is that the justified criticism over the price of the neoliberal shift within academia (Tirosch 2015; David 2016) should not overlook the benefits embedded in framing the campus as a workplace. When it comes to working conditions on campus, the debate should not be framed as being between two opposing concepts—the university as a realm detached from economic considerations or the university as a neoliberal organization—but should concentrate on the conditions that can support universities to function as humane employers (see, also, Vu Thuc Linh et al. 2015).

Sisterhood Crying

Research shows that crying can be triggered by positive events, such as the birth of a child, and express positive emotions such as relief, happiness, or joy (Simons et al. 2013: 1). The next two crying episodes I wish to present are examples of what I call ‘sisterhood crying’. They demonstrate that positive crying is not necessarily about tears of joy but also tears of sadness and loss that nevertheless express empathy, gratitude, and hope. Unlike distress crying, which results from fear, conflict, or unmet expectations, sisterhood crying is the outcome of bonding and mutual support, which can be a welcome part of academic life on campus—and indeed should be, if we strive for a feminist academia.

For the last few years, I have been teaching a course designed to equip gender MA students with advanced academic reading, writing, and presentation skills. I teach the part that centers on the social sciences and law, and my colleague, Miri Rozmarin, teaches the part that centers on

the humanities and arts. We use the subject of motherhood as a shared theme that bridges both elements. Each year, Miri and I struggle with the goals and structure of the course. In particular, we carry the memories of a year in which a few of the students could not bear what they experienced as harsh feedback from me over their presentations. I remember feeling puzzled by seeing some of the students in class with tears in their eyes, not understanding what triggered them. It was only after one of the students contacted me and explained how she had experienced the feedback that I realized how traumatic it had been for her and for others. I remembered her likening her feedback experience to that of an injured hiker on top of a mountain awaiting a helicopter evacuation, only to be further injured by flying stones caught up in the helicopter turbulence. For the purpose of this essay, I contacted that student and asked if she was among those who had cried during that course. She said that, sadly, she never cries but that, if she did, this would have been one of these occasions. Ever since that year, Miri and I have asked ourselves whether we should oblige the students to present or to make it optional. We have debated what constitutes constructive feedback, whether we should grade relative excellence or effort as well, how to cope with wide divergences in student ability, and the extent to which academic skills can be improved in one course. This is part of a broader ongoing discussion within the Women and Gender Studies Program at Tel Aviv University over the meanings of feminist pedagogies.

Last year, the same course provided an example of ‘sisterhood crying’ on campus. We were discussing a chapter from Michal Krumer-Nevo’s (2006) book on women in poverty. The chapter centers on the story of a single mother struggling to raise her two young children under economic duress. It explores the bitter childhood the mother experienced herself, the abusive relations she had with the children’s father, and the critical judgment she is facing from social workers. Krumer-Nevo brilliantly ‘converses’ with the readers, exposing our un-empathetic criticism of single mothers, as privileged observers who blame the mother for buying sweets and video games for the children while she cannot pay the rent. By giving the mother a voice and placing her choices in the context of her devotion and love for her children, her deprived childhood, and the inadequate safety net of the shrinking Israeli welfare state, Krumer-Nevo

manages to crack our judgmental biases and makes us question them. During the discussion in class, one student chose to disclose something of her own personal circumstances, having been moved by the text. A divorced mother herself and a successful officer within the male-dominated Israeli Prison Service, she told us that the text we were discussing academically had changed her relationship with her mother. She described how the single mother in the text echoed her own mother, struggling to support her children with the very little she had, and how Krumer-Nevo's discussion had made her realize how harshly and unjustly she had criticized her mother all these years. With tears in her eyes, the student described an experience of closure and comforting love with her elderly and sick mother, inspired by the text. I, as well as many students in class, allowed our tears to join hers. We witnessed a rare moment of perfect synergy between knowledge and experience, intellect and emotion, mind and soul. It is such moments that remind us of the importance of the ongoing attempts to achieve such synergy through feminist pedagogy that insists on the interconnection between the political and the personal, theory and everyday lives, rationality and emotion—and which places students, and not only professors, as sources of knowledge (hooks 2000).

Notwithstanding, it is important for me to note that, in the division between the camp of the maternal, nurturing, communal, and egalitarian feminist pedagogy (e.g. Webb et al. 2002) and the camp of the authoritative, potent, passionate, and hierarchal feminist pedagogy (e.g. Luke 1996), I ascribe to the latter. I understand my role as a professor as providing academic knowledge and being a female role model of authoritative and excellent academic skills. I consciously choose *not* to play the role of mother or therapist to my students, nor to bring empowering women's circles into my pedagogic methodologies and practices. Rather, I use teaching methodologies in which I am the main source of knowledge, and which demand excellent intellectual abilities from the students. Nonetheless, I am committed to an ongoing learning process of feminist pedagogy and try to constantly learn from my colleagues and students about how to be both authoritative and humane. As I feel more secure within the academic field (thanks to tenure and professorship), and as I age, I allow more cracks in my 'rationality shield', to explore the possible

place of emotions within my role as a professor. Among different manifestations of this exploration, I allow myself, more so than in the early stages of my career, to join my students' tears, in class and in my office, in sisterhood crying, which blurs the phallogocentric border between mind and soul.

Regardless of the two divided feminist pedagogic camps I refer to here, what is clear is that feminist pedagogy, like humane pedagogy more generally, should strive to avoid driving students to distress crying. Several of the emails I received in response to my call for 'crying on campus' stories were from students. The most detailed one was from an Israeli–Palestinian MA student from the Gender Studies Program. Her email told five crying stories. Only one was an example of sisterhood crying, resulting from a group meeting on a course on gender and psychology, during which she realized that her personal sexual violence experience resonated with the stories of other students. The other four episodes were distress crying, caused by: the ridicule of fellow students when she could not articulate her thoughts in Hebrew, being new to campus; a supervisor who ignored her; an examiner who refused to grant her the time extension to which she was entitled because Hebrew is not her mother tongue; and racist and chauvinistic remarks made by one of her professors who also gave her an unjustified low grade. These distress crying episodes are a very important reminder of the special attention feminist pedagogy should give to on-campus intersectionality vulnerability, to which professors and the university as a whole are so very often blind (Dooley and LePeau 2016).

The last crying story I wish to tell is that of my mourning tears over the loss of my colleague Orna Cohen. In 2010, I was invited to conduct an evaluation study of the two Israeli shelters for victims of human trafficking. I agreed, but thought my socio-legal expertise would not be sufficient for this project, and asked Orna, from the School of Social Work at TAU, to join me. For two years we conducted an intensive study that included individual and group interviews with trafficking survivors, shelter staff, and policy makers, as well as in-depth analysis of legal and policy artifacts. We analyzed the data together and wrote a very detailed report (Hacker and Cohen 2012). The next stage was to write academic articles based on the study's findings, each of us taking the lead on a distinct aspect of the work while consulting one another as second authors. I was

to lead on a socio-legal paper, and Orna a paper on rehabilitation. In addition to our desire to further theorize our findings, we had a more pragmatic consideration, as we were fully aware that our report would not be considered 'academic' enough to fulfill the requirements for promotion on campus. After several months, I met up with Orna to discuss my initial thoughts on the socio-legal paper. She confided that she was unwell. It sounded serious, but neither of us thought this might be our last meeting. She explained that she would be unable to contribute to the socio-legal paper, and that I should not wait for her but write it solo, as it was crucial for my promotion. I was worried about her and very touched by her collegial generosity. A few weeks later, I received what turned out to be a farewell email from Orna. She wrote that, after great hesitation and significant thought, she was choosing to let me know that her health was deteriorating and she did not see any 'light at the end of the tunnel'. She urged me: 'take all the materials from the report as you see fit and prepare articles as you wish and as the only writer, in your name only!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Including the paper on the rehabilitation, you know this subject perfectly. It will assist you towards the associate professor degree'. She added: 'It is a shame we can no longer work together, our mutual work was a very special experience for me'. I refused to accept this verdict and wrote back that I would await her recovery and look forward to our continued cooperation. But three months later, I received the message that Orna had passed away. I cried, this time with no audience for my tears, for my dear colleague and for her beloved family, for the life that had ended too soon. Later on, I pondered on what I should do about the articles. I was grateful for Orna's 'ethical will' that allowed me to move on with both papers. I invited the two research assistants who had accompanied us during the study to write the rehabilitation paper with me and dedicated both this paper and the socio-legal one to Orna's memory (Hacker et al. 2015; Hacker 2015).

I cherish my tears over Orna as a constant reminder of the importance of sisterhood among female academics, and especially feminists, on campus. As members of a minority group, subordinated by masculine professional and organizational norms, female academics must be there for each other. This support must include (and this is not an exhaustive list): professional cooperation; fighting for the nomination and promotion of

female colleagues; being mentors and mentees; establishing ad hoc or ongoing support groups for themselves and for female students; helping conceptualizing and naming their experiences as women on campus; sharing professional and organizational survival knowledge; promoting feminist issues on campus; celebrating each other's achievements through references, awards, and ceremonies; and emotionally validating each other with a smile or a hug or a tear.

Conclusion

In her groundbreaking work on the commercialization of feelings, Hochschild (1983: 28–29) offers feelings ‘as a clue’: ‘like seeing and hearing, [emotion] is a way of knowing about the world. It is a way of testing reality’. Hochschild warns that when we surrender to our employer's attempts to engineer our feelings, to make us manage and control our emotions, we are losing touch with reality and with ourselves.

I cherish the rare cases in which I cried on campus, as reminders of my genuine feelings. I understand them as acts of resistance in the face of a male institution that would prefer to operate as an emotionally controlled and suppressed sphere. Their lessons are important precisely because my tears are a female, unplanned, and authentic outburst of emotions that crack the façade of sterile rationality.

I hope that the stories presented here are convincing examples of the need to qualitatively study crying as a set of ‘clues’ embedded in a social context. In particular, I hope that they are convincing examples to support my argument that crying can provide an exceptional, if unorthodox, prism through which to judge the academic field—a litmus test for a feminist and humane university. As a minimum standard, we should strive for a university that does not cause distress crying and the feelings it represents. The two distress crying stories I told point to the importance of perceiving the university as a workplace with an obligation to provide decent employment conditions, and not confusing it with the home or with the self. These distinctions offer crucial shields from labor exploitation and the loss of the self. At the same time, placing my distress crying in context highlights the relative privilege of academic staff

compared to administrative staff and students, and also of my own privileged position compared to brilliant minds who are not part of campus, due to lack of discrimination, and other academic colleagues, for example, Palestinian colleagues, transgender colleagues, or colleagues from weaker socioeconomic background (see, also, Taylor 2012). As feminists, we must aspire to an inclusive university that does not knowingly and recklessly distress any of its populations.

As a more ambitious standard, we should strive for a university that cherishes and promotes empathy, emotional support, and the exposure and nurturing of links between academic knowledge and personal experiences. The two sisterhood crying stories I told demonstrate how much we, as learning individuals and a learning community, can benefit from letting supportive and empathic feelings into our professional relations and our classrooms. At the same time, as feminists, we should fight the common confusion between empathy or emotional support and academic mediocrity and compromise. The challenge is to promote academic excellence while not accepting the current masculine model of an individualistic, competitive, unemotional academic field. On a more abstract and generalized level, I believe there is a link between the way academics perceive themselves and their students and the way they perceive the world worth studying. My call for a feminist and humane university is relevant not only for the betterment of relations on campus but also as part of a greater mission to maintain a holistic view of our subjects of study. In an era in which psychology, for example, turns into brain science, and the need for the humanities is being questioned as they are less marketable than law or engineering, we are at risk of hegemonic scholarship that reduces humanity to numbers and cells.

Epilogue

As I am trying to write the Conclusion's last lines and finish this paper before the deadline, my 13-year-old son starts crying bitterly. It is Saturday, his father is in China on business, his sister is away at a fencing competition in France, his friend just left, and he feels neglected and demands attention. If I thought the challenge of parenthood would end

once my children were as tall as I am, it was just because I forgot how hard it is to be an adolescent. My heart is broken by his tears. My only comfort is my pride that, in our house, boys are allowed to express their feelings through tears. His crying is a reminder of how hard it is to practice what I preach. How many times did I swear never to work on Saturdays? How many times did I promise myself not to take on projects with a deadline? How many times have I encouraged myself to insist on a *femina academica* that is not enslaved to her paid work? In vain. Time after time I surrender to the pressure to perform according to the ideal *homo academicus* who is supposedly free of familial obligations and supposedly chooses to dedicate all his time to research, teaching, and university service. I will end now, so I can go and be with my son, with the hope that in the future he will no longer have to teach me a university-related lesson with his tears.

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When Love Becomes Self-Abuse: Gendered Perspectives on Unpaid Labor in Academia

Francesca Coin

Debunking Love

During the 1970s, feminist scholar Silvia Federici argued that one of the main challenges in the *Wages for Housework* campaign lay in the fact that women's domestic labor was presented as an act of love, a natural attribute of the female personality that required no monetary compensation. Federici's critique of the Fordist mode of production grew out of the *International Wages for Housework Campaign* launched in 1971 by activists and scholars such as Selma James, Brigitte Galtier, and Mariarosa Dalla Costa, who maintained that the social construction of gender forced women to contribute an immense amount of unpaid labor to industrial production. In their analysis, the Fordist assembly line found its origin in the domestic sphere, where the hidden reproductive labor of millions of women created the emotional and physical conditions that enabled individuals to sell their labor in the factory. In those years, reproductive labor was not considered as work but rather as a

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Y. Taylor, K. Lahad (eds.), *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University*, Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64224-6_14

predisposition, “an internal need, an aspiration, supposedly coming from the depth of our female character” (Federici 1975: 2). In recent years, scholars have often turned to the *Wages for Housework* campaign to describe the contradictions of “immaterial” and “cognitive labor” that characterizes post-Fordism (Gorz 2003; Gill and Pratt 2008; Castells 2009). Marked by innovation in technology, digitalization, and communication, the post-Fordist economy has emphasized the importance of those relational and affective skills that have historically been identified with feminine labor (Hesmondhalgh 2007). The post-Fordist economy has also used love to conceal the pressure to facilitate endurance in a context marked by increasing casualization of labor and protracted competition. Love and passion have become necessary resources to support individuals in self-promotional practices while concealing a labor regime in growing proportions unprotected and unremunerated. The coexistence of love and casualization has been particularly relevant in academic labor, where scholars have been encouraged to rely on passion to brand themselves and succeed within a context of competition driven by mission-driven commitment and limited social security. In this context, love and passion provided “both (1) the actual reason motivating actions and professional choices and (2) a rhetorical genre, a motif or ‘motive’ that social actors deploy to build consistent and socially acceptable narratives about their jobs” (Busso and Rivetti 2014: 16).

This chapter reflects on the role of love in academic labor. It examines love as being both an emotional resource capable of transforming labor into “an absolute end in itself, a calling” (Weber 1930: 25), which is perfectly compatible with an insecure labor regime, and at the same time as a trap that encapsulates individuals in a labor market that is increasingly characterized by intensified work rhythms, requests for unlimited availability and labor control. Drawing on data collected in the course of an online survey called *Ricercarsi*¹ that was administered to 1864 academics and with 20 in-depth interviews, this chapter tells the stories of precarious academics in Italy: researchers, postdocs, and adjunct professors who often work long hours in hopes of nebulous rewards such as co-authoring papers, receiving recommendation letters or vague promises of future employment. Despite the mainstream discourse tending to present academic labor as the privilege of young scientists “doing what they love”,

these interviews often portray academia as a *de facto* exploitative labor market where adjunct professors and precarious academics barely make a living, often dwelling in overcrowded homes and on occasion turning to deviant behavior to make ends meet. Locked in a system of promises about their future, young academics often endure financial hardship and long periods of isolation in the hope of financial stability and social recognition. The question is whether the benefits outnumber the costs: whether such devotion can lead to personal fulfillment or rather entrap them in an abusive relationship chronicled by costly sacrifices and uncertain prospects.

Feeling Academic in Italy: A Case Study

This chapter focuses on the relationship between love and academic labor in Italy, a country that in some ways has become a paradigmatic example of the transition to neoliberal education. Over the past ten years, the joint impact of the neoliberal reform of higher education and the economic crisis has resulted into a radical transformation of Italian academia. Until 2005, precarious scholars comprised nearly one third of the academic body. By the end of 2013, they represented more than 50%. In 2013, Italy's universities had lost more than 9000 permanent scholars compared to 2008, including 5000 full professors and 2500 associate professors (European Commission 2015: 9). The combined effect of retirement, budget cuts, casualization, and lack of career opportunities resulted in an unprecedented downsizing of the university system, attested by a massive expulsion of aspiring academics. In those years, new legislation such as Law 1/2009 and Law 240/2010 introduced major changes to the recruitment process, leading to an increase in temporary personnel that largely precluded access to tenure track positions. The slowdown of career advancement opportunities and the negative outlook for young scholars turned into widespread international mobility that drove nearly 20,000 temporary researchers, postdocs, *assegnisti*, and para-subordinate researchers to leave the country between 2010 and 2012. Between 2008 and 2013, the overall number of permanent professors and researchers decreased by 14.8%. At the same time, the number of precarious

researchers increased by 61%. By the end of 2014, only 48.3% of academic staff were permanent (Toscano et al. 2015). In perspective, such sharp downsizing had a negative effect on universities' ability to perform their activities in terms of teaching and research. In part, such activities were externalized to fixed-contract researchers and research collaborators, for the most part *assegnisti di ricerca*² and 8035 collaborators on research projects who are external university staff (Toscano et al. 2015).

In 2013/2014, *Ricercarsi* represented the first attempt to evaluate the impact of casualization in Italian academia. The goal of the survey was to investigate the perception of academic labor at a time in history characterized by massive expulsion from the academic system. Saskia Sassen's notion of expulsion (Sassen 2014) is particularly fitting in this context as it underscores a systemic transformation induced by a rapid restructuring of the welfare state that has forced personal expectations to adjust to a dramatic exclusion from the public system. To show the dimensions of such a process, it is suffice to say that the percentage of precarious researchers recruited to Italian academia with a permanent tenure track position between 2004 and 2013 amounted to 6.7%—the remaining 93.3% have all been expelled from the system. Funded by the Flc-Cgil, the largest union in the research sector in Italy, in 2013–2014 *Ricercarsi* investigated the ambivalent relationship that contingent academics have with their labor at a time of rapid transformation.

The research was divided into three parts. The first part was intended to shed light on the numbers involved in academic labor in Italy. One of the complicated aspects of short-term work is that even the data are precarious, as Mario Toscano has pointed out. Ephemeral in nature, precarious jobs tend to be temporary and informal, leading the data to be vague and uncertain. In this sense, the first and necessary step in analyzing contingent labor in Italian academia was to shed light on the role that fixed-contract researchers, research collaborators, *assegnisti*, and para-subordinate researchers play in the university system. Drawing on records provided by the Ministry of Education and concerning the years 2003–2013, the research shed light on the numbers of precarity in Italian academia, unveiling the rapid downsizing of the Italian academic system and its negative impact on teaching and research activities. Revealing that 93.3% of young researchers had been expelled from the system and that 60% of

doctorate students were planning to leave the country in the next few years, the research revealed the growing instability of the Italian academic system (Toscano et al. 2015).

The second goal of our research was to investigate the working and living conditions of these researchers. In this sense, the second part of our research was an online survey that remained available between October 2013 and April 2014 for a total of seven months, amounting to 1864 respondents. The use of an online survey method allowed us to reach a population that is by definition dispersed and fragmented, including those individuals that had in the meantime been able to find a stable job in a different sector or moved abroad. In the first instance, the online survey was distributed in all communities that were in any way involved with academic and short-term labor (social media, blogs, mailing lists, and extant associations). In this phase we asked communities to solicit responses using a snowball sampling method to better suit an online survey (Toepoel 2016). In the following stages, we solicited responses from specific communities until our desired sample size and sample composition were achieved. The final sample included 1826 respondents. It comprised respondents from all disciplinary fields: the humanities (25%), the social sciences (24.1%), the natural sciences (29.7%), and the applied sciences (21.2%). The largest part of precarious researchers comprised *assegnisti* (51%), postdoctoral researchers whose contract can be renewed annually for a maximum of four years and whose labor conditions are characterized by low wages and weak social protection. In terms of age distribution, 60% of respondents were between 30 and 40 years old with an average age of 35 years. In terms of gender, respondents were 57% female and 43% male, hence reflecting the gendered distribution of academic labor in Italian academia.

The questionnaire comprised eight sections. First of all, it attempted to reconstruct the short-term labor journey of each respondent, mapping the fragmented contracts that composed their path towards employability. Their social background, economic situation, area of study, family demographics and household responsibility, working conditions, the consideration of their labor, and finally their idea of the future were the variables selected to help us understand what enables or inhibits success in an academic environment. The goal of the questionnaire was specifi-

cally to investigate the material conditions of academic labor and these researchers' emotional perceptions. How do academics reconcile the explicit or implicit demands of academic efficiency with the demands of being a mother or a father, a wife or a husband, a single man or a single woman? How do they respond to labor insecurity? Ultimately, what do the lives of these scholars tell us about the future of academic labor in Italy? These are the questions we have tried to answer in the third and final part of our research, which involved the administration of 20 in-depth interviews to a sample of 20 precarious researchers from different campuses situated in the north, central, and south of the country. Given the vulnerable conditions of these scholars, we decided to ensure respondent confidentiality and to protect the identities of the individuals who participated in this research. In this sense we erased from our report those traits that would make them identifiable—limiting ourselves to indicate their gender, position, and their geographic location in Italy.

Academic Labor as a Labor of Love

While it will not be possible to detail the entire research in this context, my goal is to look at the emotions and material conditions that define academic labor. It is worth beginning with the emotional landscapes that the respondents associate with their jobs. In our survey we asked respondents to describe how they felt about their work. More precisely, we posed an open-ended question asking respondents to indicate the three words that best represent their experience of academia. The word cloud revealed a very ambivalent perception that alternates positive adjectives such as stimulating, fulfilling, satisfying, and engaging with critical adjectives such as frustrating, undervalued, or burdensome. Generally, the first word chosen by respondents had a positive connotation, whereas words with a negative connotation were indicated as a second or third choice, shedding light on a fragmented perception that tends to favor an encouraging imaginary of academic labor by focusing predominantly on its strengths and qualities. As we shall see, this is an underlying aspect of our research, which often reveals an attempt to reframe academic labor as an enriching experience despite the discontent that characterizes it. Joining

sociologists and social scientists who have insisted on the social and cultural life of emotions, Sara Ahmed (Ahmed 2004) suggests looking on emotions as cultural constructions that are not produced by the object itself but rather involve a process of interpretation whereby the narratives describing each object are constantly confronted by each individual's experience. Drawing on Descartes' observation that "objects do not excite diverse passions because they are diverse, but because of the diverse ways in which they may harm or help us" (Descartes et al. 1985: 349; quoted in Ahmed 2004: 5), this suggests that the emotions associated with academic labor could be considered as social constructions that can be constantly redefined by individual experience. Given the rapidity of the neoliberal reform of education, it is possible that the positive connotations that emerge in the word cloud reflect an imaginary of economic nostalgia, a world of full employment where academic labor is still constructed as a symbol of prestige. In a way, academic labor is entrenched in the cultural history of modern society that brings us back to figures of speech rooted in ancient tropes and cultural vocabularies that linger in our collective imagination, as Steven Shapin has shown us (Shapin 2012). Drawing on Sara Ahmed's work, we can posit that such cultural construction nurtures the imaginary of academic labor. The questions are: How are such narratives reconciled with the embodied experience of contingent labor? How do precarious researchers adjust to a shift in the horizon of operability introduced by austerity and the neoliberal reform? Can love endure such neoliberal restructuring or should we expect such emotional landscapes to be deconstructed and demystified as occurred during the 1970s?

Academic Labor as an Embodied Experience

In general, our sample was comprised to a great majority by *assegnisti* (51% of female respondents), coupled with Ph.D. students (12.4% of female respondents), freelance researchers (22.3% of female respondents), fixed-term researchers, and researchers who had found a stable position. Generally speaking, women were the majority in the most precarious positions: short-term collaborations and para-subordinate

contracts largely featured female researchers (22% women and 14% male), while women were underrepresented in more stable positions—both fixed-term and permanent researchers were predominantly male (respectively 9.1% female and 15.4% male; 4.4% female and 7.9% male), unveiling the resilience of gender inequality in academic achievement: as we shall see, promotion and initial placement reveal the resilience of male advantage in academic attainment.

Even though a small percentage (4.4%) of respondents had gained a permanent position by the time of our survey, all respondents had undergone a long journey of labor uncertainty: the average number of contracts had by each researcher over the previous five years was 6.2, meaning that on average, each person signed more than one contract per year, both inside and outside the academic system. The former perception of academia being an exclusive job market chronicled by a binary process of inclusion or exclusion is interrupted by a situation whereby temporary occupations within and beyond academia overlap, integrate one another, and often coexist. In this sense, 39% of respondents admit having had both inside and outside appointments within their academic activity: 10.4% of respondents admit having had between 13 and 30 different appointments, indicating a creative assemblage of occupations ultimately intended to make ends meet. Unsurprisingly, over 43% of respondents confess to not having the possibility to focus on their research. More precisely, 45% of para-subordinate scholars, 41.5% of *assegnisti*, and 48.5% of fixed-term scholars confess to not being able to give continuity to their research due to their professional instability, indicating that professional insecurity has a negative impact on research quality and personal life. In general, 52.5% of respondents live with their partner and 19.1% live alone, while 11% have flatmates and 17.4% live with their family of origin. In this sense, most of the respondents share their lives with a partner even though 71% of them have no children. The precarious academic is generally reluctant when it comes to having children. For women in particular motherhood is often *not an option*, given the subaltern nature of their professional condition. As the interviews will make clear, there is often no formal recognition of maternity leave. This means that the overrepresentation of women in subaltern positions often goes hand in hand with the inability to make any other long-term plans,

revealing a condition of professional insecurity that extends to their private lives. Even though the rhetoric of gender equality has been used to legitimize labor flexibility, the transition towards a flexible labor regime in academia has come with long hours, low pay, lack of job security, and lack of access to basic benefits, conditions that appear to have limited women's independence rather than securing it.

In general, most temporary scholars have a net income of between 10,000 and 20,000 euro. It is easier for men to land at the high-end of the income distribution, whereas women are largely located in the lowest part of income distribution: 71% of women earn 10,000 euro per year. Those who cannot earn sufficient income through academic labor are forced to look for employment outside academia (40%) or seek support from the family of origin (22%). Others seek their partner's support (19%) or cut their own expenses (12.5%).

My family's support allows me to continue this job, although it is not sufficient because my job only recognizes my work economically for the hours I spend on frontal lectures... However we do the same work of a full professor, meaning that we supervise students and their thesis. I myself supervise several M.A. candidates and if you consider the office hours, the time required for exams and student orientation... if only they gave us a voucher for each thesis we supervise.... (Adjunct, female)

The social capital of the family of origin is significant in predicting the ability to remain inside the academic system. In an attempt to verify the variables that influence permanence in the academic market, Giancola and Toscano (2017) relied on a multiple correspondence analysis (Mca), a data analysis technique used to detect and represent underlying structures in a data set. They concluded that the economic conditions of the family of origin have a significant effect in making it possible for precarious researchers to work in the academic system. In other words, an affluent family can compensate for the economic vulnerability produced by labor impermanence. This also means that precarious scholars from a low socioeconomic background may be the first ones to quit academic labor. As we shall see, the social capital of the family plays a big role in the ability to access an academic position.

In this sense, academic labor resembles an apprenticeship. Apprentices often do not receive a salary for their labor but rather gain the skills and expertise necessary to secure for themselves an occupation in the future. The sustainability of academic labor often requires that the family of origin make an investment in their children's future by being economically supportive of their apprenticeship. The problem is that casual academic labor is not an apprenticeship. State disinvestment in education makes it difficult for individuals to succeed in academia despite family support. In this sense, academic labor sometimes resembles a risky bet that filters employment opportunities according to socioeconomic status. It is unsurprising that the daily experience of academic labor reveals a constant negotiation whereby the benefits of prestige are constantly offset by the personal sacrifices required to endure an under-remunerated labor regime. One respondent admits having experienced "a long period of disillusionment" where she was often tempted by the benefits of leaving academia.

I am undergoing a period of disillusionment because I long for stability in my life.. on the contrary, if you want to find any stability you need to move abroad and if you have affective relationships that is not possible... as a result any plans I make will be ideally outside academia; I am fine with any work sector at this point and have given all I had to the academic system.
(*Assegnista*, female)

In a similar fashion, another respondent confesses wondering how long she would be able to endure the sacrifices required to continue her work.

It's been a difficult time because I had to understand my priorities, whether waiting for an opportunity was worth it or not and how much I was willing to sacrifice to continue doing this work [...] waiting so long for this opportunity has led me to believe that it was either all or nothing, you reach a point that you don't want to find yourself in such a position that you have to reinvent yourself again. (Doctoral student, female)

The burden of academic labor seems particularly troublesome when it comes to women, as their longing for independence often appears to be

in conflict with the sacrifices demanded by their academic lives. In this sense, precarious women struggle to reconcile their longing for stability with a condition of vulnerability that often interferes with their own self-esteem and economic independence, leading to a protracted experience of frustration and disillusion.

It's Not Love, It's Unpaid Labor

The complexity of this situation increases if we think that the lack of economic stability is complemented by the permanent burden of unwaged labor. Sixty percent of respondents declare having done unpaid labor “sometimes” or “often” throughout their academic career. The percentage refers, once again, to women. We asked both male and female respondents to list the different tasks they perform in relation to their role. Predominantly, unpaid labor is used to cover up the reduction of permanent staff introduced by austerity and budget cuts.

Specifically:

- Permanent researchers undertake services for student orientation and supervise students' theses that are formally assigned to them as well as to other associate or full professors (16%), on top of undertaking specific administrative tasks (12.6%).
- *Assegnisti* supervise student theses that are formally assigned to others (23.8%), provide services for student orientation (20%), and perform administrative tasks (10%).
- Ph.D. students offer services for student orientation (29.6% of cases).
- Para-subordinate researchers perform tasks for student orientation (26.3%) and supervise students' theses that are formally assigned to them (23.8) as well as others (22.4%).

On top of these tasks, more than 38% of doctorate students take on teaching assignments that are not formally recognized, just as do 25% of subordinate researchers.

It must be noticed that these tasks are not part of the contractual agreement and as such they are not formally recognized or remunerated.

Teaching is not included among the duties of permanent researchers, in Italy, just as it is not required of *assegnisti*, Ph.D. students, or para-subordinate researchers. In a sense, unpaid labor is the symbol of an underfunded system that uses temporary scholars as shock absorbers for institutional strains. Multiple tasks are outsourced to precarious researchers even though they often do not receive any formal compensation for them, either in terms of monetary compensation or in terms of social recognition.

In the questionnaire, we asked respondents to indicate the frequency of labor outside the standard schedule (on weekends, in the evenings, or late at night) and the types of tasks it involved, whether they were included in the different contractual agreement of each category (as are, for instance, research, publications, or panel presentations) or not included (or at least not explicitly included) in such agreements. Taking into account this set of data, we used principal component analysis (Pca) to create two different indexes. One index measures productivity in activities directed towards one's own career—in other words, it measures labor done in addition to the regular schedule in order to publish more or attend more conferences, for instance. The other index measures labor carried out for others—those activities performed in addition to the regular schedule that are unrelated to one's own research. Results show that it is largely the most vulnerable categories of precarious researchers who work for others, more specifically para-subordinate researchers and *assegnisti*, whereas fixed or permanent researchers use nights and weekends to continue their own research. In this sense, the most vulnerable categories of temporary researchers compensate for institutional strains. As mentioned above, the sharp downsizing of the Italian academic system had a negative impact on the universities' ability to perform their activities in terms of teaching and research. Oftentimes, these activities are externalized on contingent personnel with vulnerable labor contracts.

Women are overrepresented in the performance of unpaid labor. The amount of unremunerated labor performed by women over men is an issue that has not received much attention in academic literature. Recently, Cassandra M. Guarino and Victor M. H. Borden (2017) have investigated the gender gap in academia with respect to faculty service loads. Drawing on 2014 data from a large national survey of faculty at

more than 140 institutions, they find evidence that, on average, women faculty perform significantly more unpaid labor than men, controlling for rank, race/ethnicity, and field or department. In general, their research takes into account the unpaid work that permanent faculty undertake in internal and external service (Pyle and Ward 2003), meaning unpaid labor for one's department, school, or university in activities unrelated to one's own research. The authors include activities "related to faculty governance, faculty recruitment, evaluation and promotion, student admissions and scholarships, program supervision, development and marketing, internal awards, etc." (Guarino and Borden 2017: 2) without being recognized or compensated for their service. Their results leave little doubt as to the existence of a gender imbalance in such activities. "Both in the number of activities and in the amount of time spent on such activities [...] women report doing more, on average. [...] Thus, one might generalize that women faculty are shouldering a disproportionately large part of the burden of 'taking care of the academic family', so to speak" (Guarino and Borden 2017: 19). While their research looks at the distribution of unpaid labor along gender lines among permanent faculty members, our focus on temporary faculty leads to a similar conclusion. In this case, internal service in activities related to student orientation and supervision, teaching, and research relies on the unpaid effort of precarious scholars, primarily women. Karen M. Cardozo (Cardozo 2016) interpreted the development of a precarious and predominantly female body of adjunct instructors through the prism of feminist and intersectional studies of care work. She concluded that the overrepresentation of women in undervalued tasks in academia could be interpreted as the embodiment of long-standing patterns of devaluing socially reproductive work. In fact, the devaluation of care is reflected in the production of a predominantly female body of temporary "care laborers" who undertake internal service despite the lack of monetary compensation.

As one young researcher admitted:

I have given a lot of free labor and I must say that the conditions that I have found [name of university] are much worse than the conditions I have found elsewhere, in other words where temporary researchers are paid, whereas what happened to me and my colleagues here is that we are con-

stantly asked to work for free without any continuity of income, so I call it care-work... supervising students, organizing conferences and even doing administrative work... I do everything for free and quite often my labor is unrecognized even socially, it's free and anonymous, often professors use the lever of passion, they talk about love for culture and critical thinking [to solicit your work] and that is done in my experience primarily by progressive academics [...] and the result is an ambiguous relationship. When we work among peers aware of our labor conditions, I always have a positive experience. But when you work with a professor or someone whose superior in rank, that is a lot more complex because it comes with the demand for absolute availability and there is also a certain surprise when you try to establish some boundaries. Somehow you feel morally obliged to do all they ask of you, including organizing seminars. Professors normally do nothing until you deliver them everything they need and so it is as if they didn't know there is labor involved—it's as if it happened by magic. This is rather degrading and it produces tensions. (*Assegnista*, female)

It must be observed the involvement of contingent faculty in administrative tasks or student orientation has an impact on the advancement of temporary faculty within the tenure system, as it reduces the time for activities that are directly necessary for advancement in their own career. It must also be considered how such labor is often not simply imposed upon precarious researchers but is often also accepted. In a rather interesting reinterpretation of Marx's *Fragment on the Machines* (Marx 1973), performing superfluous labor becomes necessary in order to demonstrate one's being indispensable for the job. In this sense, unpaid labor appears to be performed by the precarious scholar in a desperate attempt to overcome a situation of insecurity.

“Do you work for free?

Yes.

Do you do other activities inside academia?

No.

What do you think about it?

It's just for me to work in this way and academic labor is very demanding, I must also devote time to supervising students. Of course, I would like for my labor to be taken into account.

Do you think free labor is a widespread phenomenon?

Yes, academia lives on unpaid labor. Besides the fact that associate and full professors cannot take care of everything, there are a number of people who, probably through passion and probably because they hope in a better future, probably because the idea of professorship gives them an image of power or intellectual prestige, there are individuals who pursue these dreams and the hope for recognition, but the truth is that academia lives on the unpaid labor of its temporary staff... the idea of future recognition could even never come... so in the meantime it's important to recognize their labor financially". (Adjunct, female)

"Do you work for free?"

Yes, because when one contract terminates and the other one has not yet begun there may be periods of discontinuity. So if I am supervising a student's work I cannot just disappear.. Therefore there are times of discontinuity when our presence in academia resembles the presence of ghosts". (Adjunct, female)

Neoliberal academia uses unpaid labor as a protection against the consequences of austerity, while precarious researchers rely on unpaid labor to show their dedication to the institution. In this context, love is at once the emotion that ensnares one within an unremunerated labor system and the emotional resource that permits one to endure it. In an interesting resemblance with domestic labor, the apparent innocence of love conceals "the most pervasive manipulation, the most subtle and mystified violence that capitalism has ever perpetrated against any section of the working class", as Silvia Federici wrote (Federici 1975: 2). At the same time, the use of love as an emotional resource capable of delivering endurance in a vicious cycle of unremunerated overload seals the diabolical pact between an exploitative labor regime and its prey. The neoliberal narrative sells the magic spell of academic prestige as a symbolic currency for unpaid labor, while the temporary worker feeds on such a spell to endure a vicious cycle of precarity and unremunerated work. In this sense, individuals seem to develop something like Nietzsche's bad conscience, "the deep sickness to which man was obliged to succumb under the pressure of that most fundamental of all changes,? when he found himself definitively locked in the spell of society and peace"

(Nietzsche et al. 2016: 73). At times, precarious scholars hang on to the narrative of love in an attempt to conceal the contradictions that entangle them into an unremunerated labor regime, hence letting the formal agreement between one scholar and one institution collapse into a system of personal favors where duties become gifts and labor security translates into reciprocal promises of protection and obedience. Although our data show that precarity is a heterogeneous experience that cannot be narrowed down to one single narrative, the aftertaste of acceptance overarching the description of academic labor as a labor of love suggests an attempt to remain locked in the spell of academic prestige despite its many detriments. In this sense, today's academia is a perfect example of Hochschild's commercialization of feelings (Hochschild 2012). Love is bought and sold to ensnare, and conversely to be ensnared, in an academic system that fluctuates between an image of prestige and a regime of labor insecurity in hope that self-sacrifice will somehow be rewarded and deliver stability and future employment.

Until Cuts Tear Us Apart

It is not surprising that exit from academia often occurs not so much by choice but rather by expulsion. Among those respondents who no longer work in academia, exit is largely the effect of a unilateral decision to terminate their appointment. Respectively 55% of female and 53% of male respondents were expelled from the academic system, while 20% of women and 17.3% of men decided to quit. Women decided to quit primarily due to their precarious conditions (18.3%), while men (20.4%) decided to quit primarily due to the grim prospects for a possible career. In this sense, women leave academia mostly for reasons related to the insecurity of their position, whereas men leave primarily for reasons related to the unsatisfactory opportunities for academic advancement. The notion of gender is hardly ever *raised* as an issue in our respondents' interviews. Both women and men seem to perceive the idea of an academic career as being a rather remote possibility. Our data also show that the recruitment of women in the early stages of an academic career has been growing to reach 40% of the total number of researchers, suggesting

the existence of a narrowing gap in the early steps of an academic career in terms of gender distribution. The rationale behind exit from academia reveals, however, a difference in expectations whereby male scholars often leave academia when their expectation of a career is betrayed, whereas women decide to quit after protracted precarity. Although gender has not been framed as an issue in the interviews that we administered, scholars seem to envision their future in academia according to expectations that differ along the gender line. In this sense, it is unsurprising that women make a decision to quit in larger percentages than men. It must also be noticed, however, that frequently exit from academia corresponds to a collapse in the vision of the future and in each person's place in such a vision. If indeed half of those respondents who no longer work in academia have been able to find a new place for themselves in the labor market in jobs that require a high level of specialization (this is the case for respectively 52% of male and 40% of female respondents), at the same time 33% of male and 35% of female respondents have remained unemployed. In line with our analysis, the highest percentages of unemployment are concentrated among individuals whose family of origin has limited social capital—individuals whose parents are either unemployed or employed in unskilled jobs, hence confirming that the social capital of the family plays a big role in social mobility. The more unsteady the professional arrangements, the riskier the investment for the future. Conversely, the riskier the investment, the greater is also the need to maintain a positive outlook on the future even at the cost of overlooking its contradictions. In this sense, regardless of the possibilities offered by the system, what is evident is the need not to take too seriously the violent threat of expulsion in an attitude of self-deception that seems sometimes instrumental in believing that such adverse conditions will someday dissolve with a little bit more discipline and self-sacrifice.

Breaking the Spell

In 2009, Maria Maisto wrote an opinion-expressing editorial entitled “An adjunct’s moment of truth”. Recalling Jane O’Reilly’s *The housewife’s moment of truth* (O’Reilly 1971), Maisto described the spark of

recognition: the little and large moments in which the lowest points of humiliation become the sources of courage that produce social transformation. Such was the experience of Maria Maisto, an adjunct scholar who taught English composition, had three kids under the age of 12 and a spouse “who has to look for a new job in the worst economy in decades”. “If you’ve been reading the news”, she wrote, “you know that contingent faculty members are among the most vulnerable workers in higher education, and each story I read about them losing their jobs to budget cuts or possible political retaliation sends a chill up my spine” (Maisto 2009). Despite this, she became the President of the New Faculty Majority, an organization funded in 2007 and dedicated “to improving the quality of higher education by advancing professional equity and securing academic freedom for all adjunct and contingent faculty” (New Faculty Majority 2009).

“Adjuncts of any gender are the housewives and handmaidens of academia”, Maisto argued. She then made a list of those elements of humiliation that became the very source of her courage:

When I discovered that buying into the university’s insurance plan for my family might cost more than my monthly pay check or when an administrator on my campus actually acknowledged—publicly—that Walmart treats its part-time employees better than colleges and universities treat adjuncts and that we constitute a highly educated working poor. When 17 adjunct colleagues and I wrote a letter to the editor of our local newspaper drawing attention to contingent faculty working conditions, only one tenured professor from our department would join the two officers from our campus AAUP chapter I had invited to sign it. When I realized that my children are likely to have college instructors who are either overworked, distracted tenure-stream professors or under-supported, freeway-flying contingents—in either case, effectively being prevented by colleges and universities from being given the highest quality education possible. (Maisto 2009)

In a sense, what Maisto defines as the adjunct’s moment of truth is what was often missing in our research. Drawing on Sara Ahmed’s work, we could say that an adjunct’s moment of truth describes the moment in which the dominant narratives that construct the representation of the object of our emotions are re-signified by the contrasting evidence of our embodied experiences. From this point of view, the narratives that

describe academic labor as a labor of love are contradicted by the experience of humiliation endured by the precarious scholar. In our case study, such idealized narratives of academic labor were reluctant to fade. In some instances, temporary academics seemed to hang onto a mystified narrative of their labor in the hope that love and sacrifice will somehow be rewarded. In a rather religious manner, self-sacrifice was considered as the price you have to pay to be graced by the academic system. In a way, such an attitude makes sense if we consider the rapid change undergone by the Italian academic system after the economic crisis. In some ways, such emotional resilience could indicate an attempt to come to terms with the shock produced by austerity. Still, now that short-term work has become systemic and expulsion has become a chronic condition, now that intellectual passion has become the main accomplice of economic insecurity and austerity, it is probably time to open up an honest discussion about the relationship between gender and unpaid labor in academia for the purpose of overhauling a system that is broken.

Notes

1. The research included Emanuele Toscano, Francesca Coin, Orazio Giancola, Francesco Vitucci, Barbara Gruning. The research report in Italian can be accessed here: Toscano, E. Coin, F., Giancola, O. et al., <http://www.roars.it/online/ricercarsi-indagine-sui-percorsi-di-vita-elavoro-nel-precariato-universitario/>. (2015). [online] Available at: URL <http://www.roars.it/online/ricercarsi-indagine-sui-percorsi-di-vita-elavoro-nel-precariato-universitario/> [Accessed 22 Apr. 2017].
2. I use the word *assegnisti di ricerca* or simply *assegnisti* to indicate postdoctoral researchers whose contract can be renewed annually for a maximum of four years and whose labor conditions are characterized by low wages and weak social protection.

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Teaching Gender in a Postfeminist Management Classroom

Nick Rumens

Introduction

In this chapter I explore the challenges that have confronted me in teaching gender to undergraduate business degree students, in the context of postfeminist and neoliberal discourses that circulate within the management classroom. Postfeminism, although a contested and slippery term to define, is mobilised in this chapter as a critical lens to examine how gender is (not) talked about by management students. I explore also the academic subject positions afforded to me in postfeminist discourse, in particular the conditions of possibility these open up for helping male students find a vocabulary to critique male privilege and men's practices in the workplace. Deploying Gill's (2007) notion of a postfeminist sensibility, this chapter provides insights into how feminist discourse on the topic of gender inequality in the workplace is out of synch with neoliberal and postfeminist discourses that assume all the equality battles have been won (Gill and Scharff 2013; Nash 2013; Tasker and Negra 2007).

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Y. Taylor, K. Lahad (eds.), *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University*, Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64224-6_15

Adding to literature that has examined the discursive dynamics of the postfeminist classroom and the prospects for teaching critically on gender (Maharajh 2014; Nash 2013; Lazar 2014), this chapter focuses on the management classroom. This educational context is apt as many business schools have not paid enough attention to bringing gender to the fore in management education (Kelan and Jones 2010). It is rarely a core subject on the management curriculum, typically occupying spaces on (option) modules that cover broader topics relating to equality and diversity, reinforcing a view that gender is a 'special issue' that can be disregarded (Kelan and Jones 2010). This is of great concern at a time when business schools and management education have come under fire regarding, amongst other things, their purpose, neoliberal ideologies, and poor track record on teaching social justice (Grey 2004; Toubiana 2014; Steyaert et al. 2016). Elsewhere, scholars have exposed the gendered and sexual inequalities these institutions and their bodies of knowledge reproduce (Fotaki 2011; Rumens 2016), adding further weight to an argument that feminism must be incorporated into the management curriculum (Ford et al. 2010).

In light of this and emergent scholarship on postfeminism in management education (Kelan and Jones 2010), it is vital to interrogate how postfeminist discourses can promulgate the view that gender does matter in the workplace, and place undue emphasis on the notion of an unencumbered individual who is entrepreneurial, autonomous, and self-perfecting. Drawing on observational data and field notes about my experiences teaching on an undergraduate equality and diversity module, I explore how male and female business students acknowledge gender but disarticulate its salience as a site of inequality within organisations. Relatedly, feminism is seen to be out of place within the management classroom, discursively constructed as a relic of the past, clearing space for a postfeminist sensibility to circulate tropes of choice and individualism. As I go on to reveal, these aspects of a postfeminist sensibility have implications for how higher educators in the management classroom, myself included, 'feel academic'. Despite moments when critical dialogue on gender (in)equality is engendered, I find that students often endorse postfeminist discourse on gender by reducing the political to the personal. These observations lead me to articulate my feelings of discomfort and

anxiety surrounding the desire to generate critical dialogue in the postfeminist management classroom, and being pressurised to fit in and align with institutional and student expectations about how I embody and teach diversity.

Postfeminism and Neoliberalism

Postfeminism is a queried term. It has been defined in different ways, not all of them useful. Making sense of the commanding literature behind it, Gill and Scharff (2013: 3–4) provide an incisive account of semantic pressure placed on postfeminism, analysing how it has been variously understood as (1) an epistemological break with feminism, (2) an historical shift after the pinnacle of second-wave feminism, (3) a backlash against feminism, (4) and as a sensibility. There is not the space here to explore the differences between these different readings of postfeminism (see Gill and Scharff 2013; also Genz and Brabon 2009; McRobbie 2009). However, for the purposes of this chapter, the notion of postfeminism as a sensibility is particularly fruitful for thinking through its relationship with neoliberalism and, as Gill and Scharff point out, for shedding light on what is ‘*new* about contemporary depictions of gender’ (2013: 4; emphasis in original).

Rosalind Gill’s (2007, 2008, 2014, 2016) work within feminist media studies has been pivotal in developing an understanding of postfeminism as a sensibility. Conceptualised as such, Gill argues that postfeminism is said to comprise a number of distinct but overlapping themes, as follows: the ‘notion that femininity is a bodily property; the shift from objectification to subjectification; an emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and self-discipline; a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment; the dominance of a makeover paradigm; and a resurgence of ideas about natural sexual difference’ (2007: 147). These aspects of a postfeminist sensibility can be treated as objects of critical analysis. For example, in regard to the theme of individualism, choice and empowerment, Gill argues that ‘notions of choice, of “being oneself” and “pleasing oneself” are central to a postfeminist sensibility that suffuses contemporary Western media culture’ (2007: 153). The discursive constitution of the

self within postfeminist media culture is, as Gill (2008) insists, an exercise in gendered power relations that calls attention to discursive processes of subjectification. Gill (2008) draws on Foucault's poststructuralism to demonstrate how power can be creative in how the self is formed and repressive in how the formation of the self is also constrained by norms.

This is exemplified in how postfeminist discourse can offer women the subject position of the 'empowered consumer' (Tasker and Negra 2007: 2), a female consumer who can, for example, buy what Baumgardner and Richards describe as 'the pink things of stereotypical girlhood' (2004: 60) without feeling they have betrayed their feminist 'sisters'. In other words, they argue that women do not have to abandon consumerism in order to be political and maintain a sense of being 'independent, irreverent, and free from judgment' (2004: 61). In this way, the empowered female consumer is discursively constructed as having a 'right' to such things as beauty products within postfeminist culture. The work of Gill (2007) and feminist scholars such as McRobbie (2009) serve up a tart corrective to the empowered consumerism offered to women by postfeminist discourse, and the promotion of 'girlie' feminism espoused by Baumgardner and Richards (2004) that is complicit with, rather than critical of, the postfeminist empowered, self-perfecting subject. Gill (2007), for example, argues that many aspects of a postfeminist sensibility act as a technology for governing subjects such as the 'empowered consumer', as someone (typically female) who is summoned to make the 'right' choices in how they manage and discipline the self. Acknowledging this, Gill and Scharff (2013) call out postfeminism's similarity with the ideological content of neoliberalism.

Elaborating this, it is important to say something about neoliberalism. Commentators such as Harvey (2005) and Giroux (2004) have articulated the content of neoliberal ideology, with Harvey pointing out how it 'proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade' (2005: 2). Similarly, Giroux comments on neoliberalism's reach, to 'include all aspects of social life within the dictates and values of a market-driven society' (2004: xxii). Neoliberalism has, as its critics maintain, conditioned a fetishistic rise of individualism, in particular its

promotion of a self-regulating subject who is seemingly in charge of their own destiny (Dawson 2013). Feminist scholars have exposed the gendered dimension to neoliberal ideology, previously overlooked in critiques on neoliberalism (Duggan 2003). For example, Nancy Fraser (2013) argues that, in neoliberalism, struggles for recognition have overtaken struggles for egalitarian gender redistribution. Women continue to be disadvantaged by structural gender inequalities in a neoliberal era that can deny, obscure, and delegitimise gender inequality (see also Meyers 2013). At the same time, feminist theorists observe that neoliberalism has conditioned the possibility for a 'new' brand of feminism, described by Rottenberg (2014) as 'neoliberal feminism'. In this incarnation, the feminist subject is said to accept full responsibility for her own well-being and self-care, 'which is increasingly predicated on crafting a felicitous work–family balance based on a cost-benefit calculus' (2014: 418). Indeed, scholars of postfeminism are also cognisant of how neoliberalism and postfeminism dovetail (Gill 2007; Gill and Scharff 2013; McRobbie 2009; Tasker and Negra 2007).

As Gill argues, the self-regulating, calculating, and autonomous neoliberal subject 'bears a strong resemblance to the active, freely choosing, self-reinventing subject of postfeminism' (2008: 164). One conspicuous connection between postfeminism and neoliberalism is how both emphasise individualism, in particular the role of the individual in changing themselves (e.g. bodies, behaviours, attitudes) in order to succeed at home and work. One problem associated with the emphasis placed on self-regulation and management is that it subdues or negates altogether the argument that the social, political, and economic contexts in which individuals are enmeshed exert influence, both positive and negative, on processes of subjectivity (McRobbie 2009). Furthermore, neoliberal and postfeminist discourses that construct the subject as self-regulating and unaffected by power relations and regimes of inequality place excessive emphasis on self-invention, where free choice is a recurring leitmotif (Tasker and Negra 2007). It is here where scholars of postfeminism have pointed out that it is women, far more so than men, who are routinely called on to regulate and perfect the self. For example, Harvey and Gill (2013) explore how sexual entrepreneurship is negotiated by men and women in a UK television show *The Sex Inspectors* and find that while

men are frequently encouraged to alter their technique, women are required to undertake an intensive remodelling of subjectivity itself.

In summary, I borrow heavily from Gill's (2007, 2008) conceptualisation of postfeminism as a sensibility, aspects of which are appropriated as objects of critical analysis. In so doing, I resist reducing postfeminism to a distinct theoretical orientation, historical shift in feminist theorising, or a one-dimensional form of feminist backlash. Furthermore, and germane to the analysis that follows, is the link between postfeminist and neoliberal discourse (Gill 2007; Gill and Scharff 2013), as it opens up a terrain for exploring a postfeminist sensibility at work within the neoliberal management classroom and business school.

The Neoliberal Postfeminist Classroom

Feminist scholars have examined the relationship between postfeminism and education (Lazar 2014; Meyers 2013; Nash 2013; Ringrose 2013; Taylor 2011). For example, Ringrose (2013) examines how postfeminist discourse has permeated the political and educational policy domains in the UK, showing, amongst other things, how postfeminist discourses have shaped 'panics' about failing boys and successful girls in school. Additionally, Ringrose explores how girls engage in processes of sexual subjectification, analysing how they negotiate sexual regulation and expression in social networking sites. Challenging the postfeminist idea of 'gender equality' and its related argument that feminism is moribund within a postfeminist culture, Ringrose provides insights into how teen girls' lives continue to be structured by concerns about boyfriends, beauty, and sexual desirability. In educational settings marked by postfeminism, a neoliberal mode of governance is set in motion that encourages girls to gaze inward, to assume responsibility for that which befalls them in and outside the realm of education.

From another angle, investigating the circulation of postfeminist discourse in the classroom and the implications for teaching gender, feminist scholars such as Nash (2013) argue that teaching gender in higher education classroom 'sits at odds with the increasing neoliberal and

postfeminist discourses, attitudes, and economics' (2013: 411). Writing on the place of gender in the Australian sociology university classroom, Nash critiques how neoliberalism has shaped the institutional logics that have been employed by many Australian universities, in particular the emphasis they have placed on universities to become market-driven, entrepreneurial, and efficient while minimising costs (see also Taylor 2014). While there have been some benefits for students (e.g. the technologised approach to learning), there are drawbacks, not the least of them being the reassertion of masculinist values that support a neoliberal sense of individualism and consumption. For Nash, the neoliberal university is also one in which postfeminist discourses often go unchallenged, reinforcing a view that women have gained significant freedoms and that feminism is no longer relevant, despite existing structural gendered inequalities. Furthermore, students who have grown up in a 1990's postfeminist and neoliberal culture are 'often taken by surprise' when studying Nash's 'Gender, Culture and Identity' module, finding that it is 'taught from a feminist perspective' (2013: 415). Nash observes that some students lack knowledge about structural gendered inequalities in Australia, bemoan the feminist theoretical element to a module on gender and culture, and rely on a notion of feminism that is predicated on the idea that 'women can do anything' (2013: 415). To counter this, Nash reflects on her use of feminist pedagogy and teaching methods that 'privilege reflexivity, collaboration and communication'. While they can achieve some success in how they 'rupture the neoliberal and postfeminist logics' in pedagogical encounters, ultimately there 'are no easy solutions' (2013: 421–22).

Similar concerns about teaching gender in a postfeminist culture are voiced by Lazar (2014). Writing on her experiences of teaching media representations of gender, Lazar champions the use of critical language awareness in order to 'keep open channels of critical dialog about gender, and, particularly, about feminism' (2014: 733). This is seen as vital at a time when postfeminist representations of gender can have an anesthetic effect on critical consciousness and 'create a climate of post-critique' (2014: 733). Indeed, Lazar discusses the challenges of analysing 'new' femininities in postfeminist discourse and media culture, as they are often 'pro-women', necessitating a deeper interrogation to excavate the

gendered, sometimes anti-feminist assumptions that underpin them. The postfeminist assertion that feminism has achieved its goals, evidenced by media representations of women who are seemingly successful in the workplace and in the home (Negra 2009), can vaporise spaces for feminist critiques to emerge. Like Nash (2013), Lazar (2014) underscores the necessity of critical dialogue that resists postfeminist discourse and its capacity to squelch the opportunities for critiquing the 'new' femininities it has given rise to.

Teaching gender in a business school is also challenging, as research shows how these institutions are strongly gendered as masculine and dominated by men, both numerically and symbolically (Fotaki 2011; Johansson and Śliwa 2014; Knights and Richards 2003). Scholars have also argued that degree programmes such as the Masters in Business Administration (MBA), often regarded by business schools as the jewel in the crown of management education, are underpinned by values and practices traditionally viewed as masculine, and associated with men rather than women, such as competitiveness, individualism, strategising, and instrumentalism (Kelan and Jones 2010; Simpson 2006). Despite these observations, little research has been carried out on how postfeminist and neoliberal discourses have influenced teaching gender in the management classroom. However, Kelan and Jones (2010) is an exception.

Kelan and Jones (2010) examine how male and female MBA students talk about gender in the postgraduate management classroom and observe how postfeminist discourse operates in management education, 'so that gender is no longer seen as salient' (2010: 26). While Kelan and Jones find that the MBA continues to entail 'learning to do business like a man' (2010: 38), this was not seen by any of the female or male students as an impediment for women progressing in the workplace. For the most part, the male MBA students were shown to make sense of their experiences of management education and work without reference to gender. More striking, for Kelan and Jones, was that female students did not reflect critically on gender discrimination in the workplace, even though some had experienced it. One strategy to deal with gender discrimination was to ignore it, justified on the basis that not doing so might impede their career ambitions. Students' discursive repertoires on gender (e.g. gender does not matter) were found to be shaped by a neoliberal and postfeminist

discourse of the entrepreneurial individual who takes charge of their own destiny. In this frame, female students denied the relevance gender as a site of inequality, not wishing to draw attention to themselves as gendered subjects who might be perceived as ‘oversensitive women’ and ‘feminists’. Another prominent feature of the talk MBA students produced was the focus on individual merit, that men and women are valued by employers based on merit and not on any other criteria, despite the scholarly evidence that suggests otherwise. Notably, postfeminist discourse that propounds the view that ‘gender does not matter’ has been documented in empirical studies about women’s experiences of work in general (Gill et al. 2017), underscoring how a postfeminist sensibility is at work, and put to work by women in repudiating gender in organisational settings.

That postfeminist and neoliberal discourses are present within management education gives rise to a number of challenges for educators in these pedagogical contexts. Kelan and Jones (2010) propose ways of registering gender on the MBA curriculum, such as specific sessions and courses on gender and diversity for all students. They also suggest using more subtle examples of gender discrimination in teaching materials, so as not to alienate students, and weaving gender into curriculum examples about men and women across the MBA so it is seen less as a ‘special issue’. The potential for backlash when teaching gender in the management classroom is noted as a significant ‘threat’ by Kelan and Jones (2010), leading them to conclude that business schools need to be ‘fundamentally remodeled to reflect subtle forms of gender awareness’ (2010: 41). As with Nash (2013), the researchers concede that there are no easy solutions to this problem. This observation, and others noted in Kelan and Jones (2010), chimes in with my own experiences teaching gender in the postfeminist management classroom, explored below.

Self-Ethnography

It is useful to provide a brief methodological note. The illustrative material used in this chapter is drawn from a ‘self-ethnography’. This term, sometimes used interchangeably with others such as ‘insider

ethnography', is a strategy for the researcher to explore the cultural constituency of their home institution. Mats Alvesson describes it thus:

A self-ethnography is a study and a text in which the researcher-author describes a cultural setting to which s/he has a "natural access", is an active participant, more or less on equal terms with other participants. (2003: 174)

In self-ethnography, there are points of connection and divergence with (auto-)ethnography and forms of ethnographic observation. As Alvesson (2003) elaborates, in self-ethnography, the researcher lives and/or works in the research setting, using the 'experiences, knowledge and access to empirical material for research purposes' (2003: 174). Significantly, the process of research, such as collecting data on the home institution's culture, is not a 'major preoccupation' in general, but acquires this status at specific moments in time. As such, the self-ethnographer is not oriented to a particular research setting for the sole purpose of gathering data. Alvesson goes on to suggest that a self-ethnographer is more akin to an 'observing participant' than an ethnographer who might be understood as a participant observer. Framed in this way, I aim to carry out cultural analysis of the postfeminist management classroom, and the institution in which it is nested. In that regard, a distinction might be made between self-ethnography and auto-ethnography, with the latter demonstrating more introspection on a vulnerable self that, although related to the cultural, is nonetheless placed centre-stage (Ellis and Bochner 2000).

The idea of self-ethnography has attracted attention within management and organisation studies (Bell and King 2010), and this chapter adds another facet to an emerging self-ethnographic approach for conducting cultural analysis about aspects of university life. For this chapter, I have relied on my participation in the field of teaching for data. As with Bell and King (2010), the research only became a preoccupation retrospectively, at the point when I started to interrogate my experiences and feelings of teaching gender and observing a postfeminist sensibility at work in the university. This motivated me to collect data, generated from observations and field notes about my experiences and feelings of teaching

gender on an equality and diversity management final-year undergraduate module, delivered over two teaching terms (autumn and spring). The module is optional but well attended, with a cohort of around 70 students. There are no mature students, but there is a strong contingent of international students who hail from countries in parts of Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia. Most students fall into the 20–25 age bracket. Furthermore, the student cohort comprises mostly women although the 20 male students who participate in this module are notable. In terms of content, the module is organised and delivered using a topic-led approach, whereby each week a specific subject is explored (e.g. gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, age). Each topic is covered by a one-hour lecture and a two-hour seminar. However, gender is a recurring theme throughout the module. It informs other topic areas covered on the module such as sexuality, aging, ethnicity, flexible working practices, bullying and harassment, trade unions, and intersectionality. The teaching ethos is critical, designed to encourage students to reflect critically on difference, inequality, and discrimination in the workplace, drawing on a range of critical theories, academic research, and organisational examples.

Representing Diversity in the Neoliberal University

Having taught equality and diversity management modules to under- and postgraduate business students for nearly 15 years, it is my observation that my identity as a gay man has often read as a marker of ‘diversity’ that can be deployed in teaching these modules. Typically, it is these types of modules where gender is most likely to be taught within business schools (as with sexuality also, see McQuarrie 1998), and by and large these modules are optional, not core. As a white, middle-class, openly gay man, I have found myself routinely asked, sometimes directed without invitation, to teach, administer, and lead such modules. I have mixed feelings about this. On the one hand, this is a positive opportunity to use my own research as a resource for developing learning materials and shaping the student learning experience, hopefully in a critical, inclusive, and interac-

tive style. I try to cultivate dialogue and a critical consciousness amongst and within students about gender and gendered workplace inequalities, problematising postfeminist discourse which seeks to convince us that all the equality battles have been won in the workplace (Gill et al. 2017). But even before I enter the management classroom, I have been overidentified as someone who teaches equality and diversity, which throws into sharp relief the postfeminist contours of the neoliberal academy.

For example, after finishing a seminar, co-led with a female colleague who also teaches on the module, we found ourselves chatting in the atrium of the building before parting company. A male academic, a member of the business school who was heading off to his next class, approached us and interrupted our conversation by greeting us as 'the school's diversity team'. Before we could reply, he was off again, but his interpellation generated an awkwardness, not, as I felt it, between me and my female colleague, but as an effect of being hailed as such. We are not the only staff who teach equality and diversity in the business school, but because we have a history of teaching and researching this subject, it appeared that we have come to stand for 'diversity'. This incident underscores how diversity is something that can be conveniently hived off, assigned to certain people and not others, road-blocking attempts to encourage all business school scholars to embed diversity and equality across the management curriculum (Kelan and Jones 2010). There is, perhaps, an uncritical consciousness in some/parts of business schools (and elsewhere in universities) that surrounds why it is certain people come to represent diversity are permitted or compelled to speak/teach from a subject position opened up through university discourse on diversity (Ahmed 2012; Taylor 2013). Indeed, I have been asked to speak to the university's equality and diversity specialist to share 'good practice', to sit on the business school's Athena Swan committee, and asked to think about how I can 'sell' diversity and equality to local businesses to improve the school's activity on innovation. However, as someone who is constituted as a signifier of 'diversity' within the business school, I find very few opportunities to open up critical dialogue with colleagues and managers about the uncomfortableness of being one of the business school's (un)official mouthpieces for 'diversity'. In other words, I feel like I am discursively constituted as a brand of business school diversity that is more a

commodity and less an engaged politics of equality. In that capacity, I am a diversity ‘success’ story insomuch as I am openly gay man who is ‘valued’ in those instances when my diversity can be put to use, such as in the classroom. Under these circumstances I feel like an organisational resource mobilised by a university that must, through initiatives like Athena Swan, market and promote their own diversity. Being ‘diverse’, as Taylor (2013) holds, can become a source of personalised pain in how, for example, academics (e.g. those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) can be pressurised to provide ‘good’ diversity stories (in regard to race and ethnicity, see also Ahmed 2012). However, I am a white, middle-class, gay man, and while this subject position does not preclude me from teaching gender, it does have implications for how the subject is taught and how it is received by students.

Elaborating this point, it has struck me that the postfeminist management classroom is one in which being openly gay does not matter in the way that it once did; arguably, I am identified less as someone who is seen as ‘abnormal’ and more as someone who is ‘normal’. On this issue, postfeminist discourse has not only influenced the emergence of ‘new’ femininities (Gill and Scharff 2013) but also ‘new’ masculinities (e.g. the subject positions of the ‘new man’, ‘new lad’, and ‘metrosexual’) in and outside the workplace (Genz and Brabon 2009; Rumens 2017). The supposed newness of these gender formations has been the target of excellent feminist critique (Hamad 2013; Tasker and Negra 2007), but postfeminist discourse has resulted in the cultural flow of assumptions about how individual differences no longer matter, in particular as a site of inequality and discrimination. In the context of the final undergraduate module on equality and diversity management, it has occurred to me that my sexuality has shaped how students can engage with the subject of gender. Striking, then, is that my being ‘out’ (as a gay man) can be read as a hindrance to challenging postfeminist sensibilities.

For example, noting my openness in regard to my sexuality, some students have ventured comments during seminars such as: ‘it must be Okay now because you’re out’; ‘It doesn’t matter these days if you’re gay’. Indeed, some students have been so keen to demonstrate their acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people that they have impressed on me how it ‘really, really, really does not matter’, as one student said to me

after I finished a lecture in which I talked about some of my work-related experiences of homophobia in the academy. In these moments, the salience of identity as a site of sexual politics is downplayed, suffocated by an unwillingness amongst some students to examine how contemporary workplaces are not exempt from the heteronormativity of everyday life. When my openness as a gay man is read uncritically as a sign that individual differences matter far less than they once did, the generation of critical dialogue in the classroom becomes more difficult (Lazar 2014). For example, in one seminar activity, a small group of students discussed how being out as a gay man could be compared to how gender does not matter, with one female student suggesting sexuality, like gender, is 'not a big deal anymore'. In drawing this parallel, sexuality and gender are conflated as outmoded sites of inequality, an assumption that may go unchallenged if feminist theories are not used to prevent discursive closure over open-ended inquiry on these topics of debate.

Feminism in the Postfeminist Management Classroom

When it came to dividing up the teaching sessions between us, my female colleague suggested I teach the sessions on gender inequality at work, with the aim of conveying to students that 'gender' is not shorthand for 'women's issues'. Indeed, the incorporation of masculinities in teaching gender-related work issues is a strategy that has been adopted by feminist scholars in management education, such as Amanda Sinclair who is 'convinced that teaching gender needs to encompass masculinities' (2000: 83). I agree, but I have found the outcomes of this approach can be unpredictable. On the one hand, some of the male students seem more relaxed that it is a man discussing the problems of male privilege as a source of gender discrimination in the workplace that disadvantages women. One male student ventured in a seminar: 'it's useful having you talk about this because I don't know how to talk about this'. While I have been able to help some male students find a vocabulary to permit them to articulate a critique of normative discourses of masculinity and men's practices in the workplace, other male students have appeared less enthu-

siastic. As one male student reasoned, during a seminar discussion on co-opting men into organisational initiatives to tackle gender inequality, 'I don't think it's relevant to me. Gender seems to be an issue that affects women'.

Crucially, as with Kelan and Jones (2010), many of the female students did not appear to reflect critically on gender. My field notes presented below, written after a seminar on gender discrimination, highlight how one female student's repudiation of gender and feminism has implications for how I am identified as a male academic:

I have just finished a seminar on gender discrimination, using feminist theories to help students understand how gender can be a critical lens for explaining gender inequality. One female student suggested that I was more 'feminist' than she is, as she couldn't name any famous feminists or see why it might be relevant to women of her generation. I think I actually blushed in the classroom because it hadn't occurred to me that I might be positioned in this way, especially as her comments provoked laughter from other students, noticeably the male students. Might there be a part of me that is ashamed of being identified as a feminist? Or is it a sense of uncomfortableness about teaching gender to business students who feel that feminism belongs to a bygone age, and that in using it I am confirming to them that I am out of place in the business school?

For some female students, feminism was considered clichéd and exhausted, or something that belongs in the past. The 'pastness' of feminism (Tasker and Negra 2007) was noticeable in how female (and male) students struggled, when asked, to name any feminists, although one female student said she thought Ed Miliband, the 2010–2015 Leader of the UK Labour Party, was a 'feminist' as she had seen a photograph of him wearing the infamous 'This is what a feminist looks like' T-shirt, sold by the Fawcett Society to promote women's rights. This triggered stimulating and critical discussion about how feminism could be open to men and women, and what kinds of epistemological commitments men and women ought to espouse when travelling under the 'feminist' banner. These moments produced more critical insights into the topic, but were resisted by some female students who felt feminism was, as one put it, a phenomenon of the '1960s'. In this vein, feminism was talked about in the past tense, and discursively constructed as a victim of

its own success, having helped women to achieve in education, at home and in the workplace, confirming its contemporary irrelevance (McRobbie 2009). Indeed, as my field notes above suggest, questions were asked by some students about why gender was being taught from a feminist perspective. In bringing feminism into the management classroom, I felt at times I was importing a relic of the past, a museum exhibit that could be consigned to the history of 'women's rights'. In these instances, I felt awkward, even defensive about why I had brought feminist theory into the management classroom, compelled to redouble my efforts to justify why feminism is relevant on an equality and diversity module in the context of business and management. All the time, thinking to myself that feminism was clearly not a resource either most male or female students felt they could relate to, or use as a resource to achieve their personal and professional ambitions.

Gender Does (Not) Matter: Fitting in, Getting on

As with some of the ambitious female MBA students interviewed by Kelan and Jones (2010), some of the ambitious undergraduate female students I taught appeared keen to place emphasis on their own ability to succeed. As one female student pointed out, 'I don't want to be seen as a special case by complaining about discrimination'. The same student spoke about needing to be 'resilient' at work, able to 'handle a few knocks'. Even when we discussed what organisations should do to eradicate gender inequality in the workplace, I noticed how students led the discussion towards what individuals could do. Making the 'right' choices and 'merit' were two important themes that emerged from these discussions, which resonate with postfeminist discourses on choice and individualism (Gill 2007). Using a case study of a woman struggling to achieve a senior management position, and what could be done to improve the career trajectories of women who aspire to be senior managers, many female students mentioned that it was a woman's responsibility to overcome these structural barriers. One female student submitted that if a woman could not get promotion in the firm she was working for, she

should search elsewhere. Other students agreed, voicing a general sentiment that women can choose to work at other companies, although some problematised this strategy by pointing out that this was not always practical due to contingencies such as available job opportunities, childcare facilities, and willingness to commute long distances. Other female students put their faith in a fictional employer that would judge them on 'merit', not their 'gender'. Male students tended to agree with the latter viewpoint, that contemporary organisations are more likely to evaluate based on merit and not gender, and that success is largely due to the efforts of the individual, despite evidence presented in class about the structural barriers that impinge on both men and women in the workplace. Here, then, organisations were talked about as though they were gender neutral, reinforcing an organisation as container metaphor, in which gender is introduced into the workplace, rather than understanding how organisations are already gendered (Acker 1990).

I find the student comments above revealing of how a postfeminist sensibility enables some women to adopt subject positions that allow them to be identified as already fitting into the world of work. Recognising themselves as such is a crucial acknowledgement of one's labour market mobility and flexibility, in particular holding the capacity to fit into and succeed in the workplace in contrast to other women who presumably cannot. The successful management of female subject positions that relate to employment and career success is foregrounded in these accounts as an important type of labour. Notably, gender and feminism are repeatedly given up and disarticulated by these students, prompting me to think through how I could encourage students to hold onto gender in the management classroom.

I introduced critical perspectives on gender by relying at times on female international students. In an exercise that encouraged students to write about their understanding and/or experiences of gender discrimination, I found comments about gender inequality in other cultural contexts were helpful in countering some aspects of the postfeminist discourses discussed above:

I come from [an East Asian country]. It's a man's world and I am so upset to know that I may never get as far as a man.

Back home we have Sharia law. A woman can get stoned to death for adultery.

I feel like my place is at home. My parents have told me that when I return from the UK after graduating, I cannot go out to work, I have to marry and be a wife.

From one perspective, these lived experiences of gender inequality incited some students to ‘register gender’ (Kelan and Jones 2010: 39). This stimulated some critically reflective discussion about how gender continues to influence women’s experiences, with several students finding ways to articulate this in regard to their own employment experiences as part-time workers and interns. One female student noted that, in her part-time job as a ‘waitress’, she had been told by her male manager to wear a ‘mini-skirt’ to work, to look ‘sexy’ for the customers. The same student, who previously seemed to speak with an air of indifference about this, saying it was ‘no big deal’, later, after reading some of the comments above, revised her original statement, saying it ‘was totally unacceptable’. Despite this convincing evidence of gender discrimination, some students read the comments in ways that had the opposite effect, reinforcing a postfeminist sensibility that dislocates gender inequality in the workplace as something that happens elsewhere (Gill et al. 2017). Several students said they felt ‘lucky’ to live in the UK, where gender inequality is ‘not a massive issue’. Here, then, I was aware of how such examples could actually reinforce the unimportance students attached to gender in the UK business context, allowing gender to ‘disappear from view’ (Kelan and Jones 2010: 39).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to explore aspects of my own trials and tribulations associated with teaching gender in a postfeminist management classroom. Some of the issues I have raised have already been voiced by scholars teaching feminism and gender in other disciplines infiltrated by postfeminist discourses such as sociology, media studies, and English literature (Maharajh 2014; Lazar 2014; Nash 2013). Building on an

emergent organisation studies literature that has started to examine how postfeminism operates within the neoliberal business school (Kelan and Jones 2010), this chapter articulates issues that may well resonate with other management educators who teach gender to business degree students, such as: how postfeminist discourses can stifle discussion on gender equality; how female students can vocalise a postfeminist sensibility that drains gender and feminism of its political valence; the spatial dislocation and generational pastness of gender equality; the emphasis students place on themselves to overcome gender discrimination. In line with Gill (2007), there is 'a grammar of individualism' that underpins many of these facets of a postfeminist sensibility, such that experiences of gender discrimination are, as Gill avers, 'framed in exclusively personal terms in a way that turns the idea of the personal as political on its head' (2007: 9). In light of this and the context wherein I have situated my experiences as an educator within a postfeminist management classroom, what feelings does this stir up?

One feeling relates to a sense of uncomfortableness, of having to manage a precarious gay male subject position so that it fits in and aligns with institutional arrangements regarding what diversity is and what it can do, and the expectations of students, some of whom clearly wonder why gender and feminism are accorded a 'special' place on a business degree module on equality and diversity. That I have at times been read as embodying 'diversity' highlights how the marginalised can be brought to the fore by institutions productively, at least as university managers and students might deem it. But like others before me (Ahmed 2012; Taylor 2012), I experience also a deep anxiety about how institutional perspectives and approaches to diversity can reinforce normative relations of power that constrain how we may speak about (in)equality in the classroom. To call attention to inequality can be risky, not least in the management classroom where inequality might already be seen as historical, for in holding onto notions of inequality as it relates to gender can generate awkwardness, hostility, and ambivalence amongst students. These emotional responses can have material consequences. How this translates into student feedback is no small matter, as student discomfort, ambivalence, and anxiety are often understood as 'negative'. Anticipating this can produce uncertainty and insecurity for those academics whose performance

is judged, in part, on the metrics of student satisfaction, but who persist in teaching these topics critically, engaging and problematising normative postfeminist conceptions of gender inequality. As one of these academics, I feel that I am an irritant in the management classroom, the person who holds onto gender and feminism despite the acid-tinged responses of some students who have embraced a postfeminist sensibility that wants us to believe that gender does not matter, at least not as a site of organisational feminist criticism.

It is important to acknowledge that postfeminist discourse is not a dead hand on feminist critique, as some of my observations above illustrate, but it can operate efficiently as a 'decoy for domination', as Baker (2008: 62) puts it. In other words, postfeminist discourses are implicated in reproducing a dominant gender order, despite strategically deploying feminism in order to do so (McRobbie 2009). Feminist pedagogy has a role to play in the management classroom (Ford et al. 2010; Sinclair 2000; Swan 2005), although organisation studies scholars have yet to consider fully its influence in problematising postfeminist discourse. Kelan and Jones (2010) is an exception, and, as noted previously, they call for strategies that help students to register gender in ways that reinforce a message that 'gender diversity and inclusion are not optional extras, but rather are seen as central to all business processes' (2010: 40). They propose making 'every business school course a gender-aware course' (2010: 39) whereby subtle examples of gender are woven into the management curriculum. This recommendation is laudable, but what Kelan and Jones (2010) neglect to discuss is the circuitry of feelings experienced by the academic who pursues this. As my experience of teaching gender (in)equality reveals, feelings of discomfort, awkwardness, and uncertainty are necessary if we are to problematise and move beyond postfeminist discourse that suggests gender does not matter in the workplace.

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Digital Scholars: A Feeling for the Academic Game

Cristina Costa

The Web and the Academy as Spaces of Intellectual Participation

The web in the context of academia and knowledge work practices is a phenomenon that is stimulating great change in the workplace (Noble and Lupton 1998; Townsend et al. 1998). Yet, our understanding of its affordances and implications in academia, in particular, is still limited.

Academic institutions are known for encouraging innovation and supporting new technologies, an expected academic contribution to society. Yet, their pace in leading and adopting new practices is often slower than that of other areas and sectors of society that academia aims to benefit (Sheridan 2010). Such paradox is especially apparent when it comes to the use of the web as both a tool and space of intellectual debate. This may be so because the practices of constructing and communicating academic knowledge have a long tradition, extending many centuries back. The Republic of Letters, epitomised by intellectual networks of the Enlightenment

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Y. Taylor, K. Lahad (eds.), *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University*, Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64224-6_16

period, for example, devised knowledge exchange practices through the writing of letters (Goldgar and George 1996; Goodman 1996; Burke 1999), while the first academic journal launched in the seventeenth century marked the start of a new convention of communicating ‘official’ knowledge to both specialised communities and wider publics (Atkinson 1999) with the support of the printing press. Although such tradition still occupies a central position in the publication of intellectual knowledge, academic journals are no longer the only nor—some would say—the most effective way to make the work of academics available to different audiences.

The advent of the web in the late twentieth century not only has progressively pervaded the lives of different communities and influenced a series of social, cultural, and economic transformations worldwide (Owen-Smith and Powell 2001; Thompson 2005; Dillner 2010; Sallee 2011), but it has also come to offer additional forms of publication, dissemination, and sharing of information to both academia and the public in general. More concretely, the introduction of the web, and its progressive transformation from a place for information retrieval to a space for collective participation (O’Reilly 2005), has impacted on the access and production of information and knowledge (Choo et al., 2000; Brown 2000; Bonk 2011; Levy 2009). This is a commodity with crucial sociocultural implications to both knowledge producers and knowledge consumers.

What is more, the web enables a new set of academic practices that are representative of a growing digital culture (Miller 2011) that features low barriers to access, creation, and sharing of knowledge (Jenkins 2009). What this creates is a new ‘information movement’ (see McLuhan 1964, p. 97) epitomised by principles of openness and democratisation of knowledge. The expectation here is that the web becomes a conduit of new knowledge ecologies that give primacy to digital representations of academic participation beyond and independently of any geographical boundary.

Recent literature points out that the web, as a space of independent participation, endows academia and its actors with a new sphere of intellectual debate, one that can also give voice to different groups in society (Kanter et al. 2010), such as students, communities, and different publics who are ultimately the audiences the academy aims to serve and research. Nonetheless—and even though the study of the web in relation to academia has often taken on deterministic views (Selwyn 2014)—it is impor-

tant not to forget the dominant cultural, political, and economic contexts of academic life which have as much potential to drive the uptake of the web as a new form of working and communicating as they do to hinder it. With the web more often than not being regarded as an unquestionable catalyst of change (Hall 2011, p. 275), how does it influence and impact on academic work? This chapter will consider the implications of the web on scholarly work within a framework of practice—that of Bourdieu (1990)—encompassing the current social, cultural, economic, and political context of academia, and when necessary will also employ Honneth's theory of (social) recognition to explore academics' practices beyond the classic dialectics of structure-agency. More precisely, the chapter will explore how academics invested in digital practices position themselves within the academy. In other words, how they feel and develop a feeling for the academic game (Bourdieu 1998). The chapter will use quotes from a research project on digital scholarship (see Costa 2014, 2015a, b) to illustrate such reflections.

The Study

This study analyses the experiences of ten academics with regard to their digital scholarship practices, especially their research activity. The research took place prior to the 2013 Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK. Research participants were recruited following a purposive sampling technique, a technique that lends itself to 'selecting information-rich cases for study in depth' (Patton 1990, p. 169). This method of recruitment enabled the researcher to work with research participants who exhibited given characteristics that make them a representative group (Topp et al. 2004) of academic researchers engaged in digital scholarship practices. The selection criteria of the study were stipulated as follows:

Research participants were:

1. employed as academics in higher education institutions.
2. active users of social media/digital technologies as part of their professional activity, that is, used a blog and a Twitter account as part of their academic activity.

The study used narrative inquiry as both method and methodology. It followed an iterative process of collecting and analysing participants' accounts of their online practices. The narrative interviews followed a spontaneous pattern of conversation as a form of providing participants with ownership of their 'histories' of practice without losing sight of the interview guide. This allowed the researcher to elicit research participants' experiences and perspectives through their own words and interpretative stance (Bruner 1991; Clandinin 2006; Clandinin and Connelly 2000; Riessman 2003).

Field notes used to remind the researcher of research participants' reactions to what they were narrating and record after thoughts and comments resulting from the interactions between the researcher and research participants. The research data were coded thematically and analysed narratively to access the meanings behind research participants' narratives (Bruner 1992; Lawler 2002), that is, narrated interpretations of lived experiences and events enclosed in the current social milieu. Bourdieu's key concepts (capitals, habitus, field, and doxa) were used to support the analysis of the data, because they provide a relevant understanding to the classic struggle between agency and structure through a dispositional theory. However, such conceptions have its shortcomings. Where it was felt that Bourdieu's key concepts reached their limit in explaining the phenomenon at hand, new theoretical constructs were used to extend our understanding of the reality under study. This culminated in the use of Honneth's work on social recognition (2007). Honneth's theory of recognition complements Bourdieu's theory of practice in that it deals with the emotional dimension of relationships. In doing so, Honneth's work provides a horizontal account of recognition in which recognition can be gained by means of intersubjective relationships. This type of understanding is linked to a more affective dimension of individuals' practices. It provides an informal type of reassurance towards one practice even when recognition is not given through formal channels. It is in this sense that such approach expands on Bourdieu's proposal of recognition as part of his theory of power and domination. Bourdieu's understanding of recognition is derived from the legitimation of an individual's capitals with a field. Recognition in a Bourdieuan sense equates to status quo (Lovell

2007), a vertical relationship between agency and structure, where the field has the last say.

Important to acknowledge here too is my role as the researcher of this inquiry. Although at the time when this research was conducted I worked at a higher education institution, I was employed as an academic-related member of staff. This meant that although I often worked with academics in a supporting capacity regarding their use of digital technologies, I was not under the same pressures they were regarding their research role. As a researcher I was aware of the need to engage in a process of reflexivity with both my own experience and those of my research participants. Establishing that difference however was not always easy given the difficulty of detaching myself from the ideas that underpinned my professional activity as a digital technologies officer. Self-reflexivity became central to my research approach as a form of consciously observing a required distance from my own practice, as a form of critical reflection on prevailing expectations (Adkins 2004) I had in relation to the influence of technology on academic practices. The observation of reflexivity allowed me to make sense of my interaction with the researched, the data generated from the narratives, and the ‘politics of creating meaning’ (Lather 1991, p. 79), a meaning that was far removed from the optimistic conceptions many educational technologists have of the web and of its place in academia.

This struggle between my own practice and my research became more apparent the more the narratives disclosed the internal conflicts experienced by the research participants. This was both unsettling and illuminating in that it contributed to the demystification of my own practice and transformation of my own professional identity. All of a sudden, I not only had to work with the subjectivity of my participants, but I also had to deal with my own subjectivity which was being reshaped by the findings the research was uncovering. In the midst of this experience, I was both making sense of participants’ identities as academics engaged on the digital and reconfiguring the interpretation I had assigned to my own practice. As someone who advocated digital scholarship practices, I realised how uncritical and detached from the politics of the academic field my own approach was. It was for this reason—and only then—that the work of Bourdieu became central to my inquiry as it allowed me to

characterise the digital ‘homo academicus’ (Bourdieu 1988) while unmasking the field, the game, by ‘exposing its terms and strategies’ (Lovell 2000, p. 26) as part of my inquiry.

What follows is an analysis of the interplay between participants’ scholarly habitus (how they feel the game) and the fields of academia and the web (where the game takes place).

A Logic of Academic Practice

The use of the web by academics in their professional capacity is often regarded as conservative (Weller 2011), with the majority of their web activity dedicated to accessing information rather than publishing knowledge (Procter et al. 2010). As intriguing as this may be given the often assumed potential of the web as an intellectual public sphere ripe for academic contribution, this can be understood as a ramification of academia’s long-standing practices and deep-rooted assumptions that academic knowledge is to be sieved through recognised publishing houses and academic journals. This assumption of what is ‘proper’ in academic work—the taken-for-granted practices of ‘how things are done around here’—denotes an undeniable acceptance of academic norms which Bourdieu would name *doxa* (see Bourdieu and Eagleton 1992). *Doxa* as ‘the embodiment of beliefs belonging to a field of practice’ (Costa 2016, p. 52) are the unspoken rules of a given field—in our case, academia—that individuals tend to incorporate as their own (academic) habitus. *Habitus*, on the other hand, encapsulates historical dispositions that orient individuals’ practices in a certain direction—in agreement or disagreement with the field, in or against the *doxic* approaches that the field adopts. The efficacy of *doxa*, as a form of hidden indoctrination, is thus more successful, the more individuals identify themselves with the practices of that field. The alignment of individuals’ dispositions with the norms of a given field works as a form of validation of their work and usually amasses to a greater feeling of belonging. The opposite tends to result in a disjuncture of the habitus (Swartz 1997), a feeling of displacement or detachment with the practice of and in the field. *Doxa* thus works in the background as a powerful mechanism of symbolic violence

(Bourdieu 1977) to provide harmony to the field as a space of collective and consistent action.

Given the long-standing tradition of academia as a field that holds the monopoly of production and publication of academic knowledge through distinctive communication platforms—namely, long-standing academic journals and renowned publishing houses—it is not difficult to understand why a great number of academics are less prone to use the web as a vehicle of knowledge production and, for that matter, as a form of activism from within. This type of disengagement is not only apparent in relation to digital practices but to a series of different issues that affect academics (Santos 2014). In this regard, activism constitutes a form of risk-taking (Shayne 2015) to which many academics are understandably averse, especially during times of economic stagnation (Beck 1992) as those experiences in the last decade. When it comes to scholarship practices as a form of activism, ‘the dominant ways of thinking and doing’ (Santos 2014, p. 9) are still predominantly non-digital. Even though digital activism is on the rise—with a special emphasis on feminism activism (see Baer 2016)—it does not seem to shake the official structures of academia as it does with other areas of professional work. For example, marketing and business have strategically adapted their culture of engagement to establish themselves online (see Kane et al. 2015). Broadly speaking, however, academia has remained immune to the digital imperatives of digital engagement and knowledge production as forms of public and inclusive communication. Beyond the endorsement of the 2002 Budapest Open Access Initiative—an international agreement to universalise the access of academic knowledge to wider publics—academia has, for its majority, remained conservative when it comes to acknowledge what constitutes academic contribution.

Academia is enveloped in a culture of prestige that leaves little room to any type of practice that lies outside or on the margins of what is perceived as appropriate or fitting of academic contribution, as illustrated by the quote example below:

Institutions are conservative, and don't want to "listen to" anything too different. We got an incredible requirement to publish...papers! It's not about what you have, it's about how much you have. So it's a contest to get more and more.

(...) Quality has lost a lot of meaning in the last years, with all this stuff about prestige and impact and so on. I am completely inside of this process, because to get a full post in the university, you need to get credibility, and to get credibility you have to have papers in journals with a high impact factor. (RP10)

Associated with the conception of prestige is the idea of distinction as ‘difference made absolute’ (Bourdieu 1984, p. 50). The combination of the two culminates in a mechanism of recognition that asserts power and position to individuals within the field, that is, symbolic capital. In theory, what this connotes is a compliance with the norms of the field as a form of hidden domination. In practice however this form of conformity depends on how similar the habitus of the agent is or becomes in relation to the field. At stake is what is identified as legit practice, one that is in essence exclusive to academia. Deviation to this logic of practice is often expected to lead to misrecognition and a greater sense of detachment from the established norm.

Bourdieu utilises the concept of recognition to convey perceptions of social classification, status, and legitimacy of one’s practice. Such symbolic forms of capital are used by academia as a strategy to preserve its field of power, while the possession of such symbols, as embodied habitus, ascertains the integration of the individual in that very same field. Acts of recognition thus imply that both agency and structure share ‘identical categories of perception and appreciation’ (Bourdieu 1998, p. 100). Yet, the web comes to shake this order with its own structure, given that it is less established as a field of knowledge and therefore less regulated. Thus what digital scholarship practices enable are acts of resistance (Bourdieu 1998) towards the established academic norms, and with it the proposal of a new approach to academic work against a neo-liberal agenda of traditional publishing through direct access to intellectual thought on a digital sphere.

In this vein, the association of the web with scholarly practice implies more than a process of digitisation of intellectual content. It proposes a complex epistemological, ontological—and for that matter methodological—change in academic practice in that it provides an alternative form of engagement with academic knowledge within and beyond academia (Costa 2014, 2015; Costa and Murphy 2015).

The emergence of digital platforms open to the public such as open access journals, blogs, and #tags discussions, to name a few, gives rise to a digital scholarship culture that is epitomised by a perceived emancipation of the academic as user, producer, and publisher of knowledge for the public good. This freedom has had the effect of expanding and diversifying the field of scholarship. Yet, this same freedom comes at a price. The web for knowledge work presents a set of issues, especially those regarding the consequences of bypassing key elite knowledge gatekeepers and contesting the symbolic capital associated with them. Thus, digital scholarship practices not only propose a new way of 'doing' knowledge work and being an academic in line with contemporary digital practices, but they also imply a re-examination of the current academic doxa (Costa 2015). What this questioning of conventional academic practices suggests is an alternative academic habitus that relies on digital communicational practices and grants scholarship practice with a wider variety of scholarly outputs and processes.

Nonetheless, given the current decline of the economy in the west and its implications on the academic job market as, for example, the threats of job security, decrease of promotion possibilities, and reduction of research funding and resources (Guarria and Wang 2011), choosing to go against the norms of the institution is a risk that few academic researchers are willing to take (Carpenter et al. 2010; Harley et al. 2010; Weller 2011). And this is precisely why it is important to ask why are academics engaged in digital practices willing to go against the norm? The reason is more than a change of practice or a technological innovation; it is a transformation of identity regarding what it means to be an academic in a digital knowledge economy:

I would position myself as an outcast (RP1)

I see myself as a bit of a lone cowboy on the frontier of the wild west [that is the web]. (RP2)

We are different kind of researcher's generation, imagine hippies in the 70s... we're a group of people who think about [digital scholarship] seriously, so we can make the difference. (RP9)

Digital practices denote a form of academic distinction which is (re)presented through difference, a different way of being academic and 'play-

ing' the academic game. This principle of distinction is asserted by the embodiment of a professional identity that is centred around knowledge activities that happen online as well as the meanings associated with them. The purpose of juxtaposing the uniqueness of digital scholarship practices in relation to traditional academic conventions leads to an appreciation of the symbols that confer its distinctiveness. In the case of digital scholars and their practices, this results in an identity affirmation as deviators from the norm (Costa 2015).

From a Bourdieuan perspective, the conception of 'deviant trajectories' (Bourdieu 1998) can be regarded as a way of reinvigorating the field of academia with new practices while questioning the power structures inherent to it. Yet, such deviations to the established norm do not seem to result in symbolic power able of transforming collective practice or achieving a higher status in the academic hierarchy. Nonetheless, digital scholarship practices as a symbol of distinction—a different form of agency—do redefine power relationships (Jarrett 2008), not only between academics and their institutions but also amongst academics engaged in different approaches to scholarly activity, with and without the support of the web:

It's [using the web] not playing safe (...), ...very self conscious about whether I should take risks or not. (RP1)

(...) when we bring our new blood in we deliberately say to them, don't engage with any of this new stuff, don't try and change practice, because you won't get recognised, you won't get promoted, so we make them very conservative. Then the only pool of innovation left are the people who've got tenure and who've got promoted, and often they've got promoted by following a very traditional path, so they're the people who are least likely to engage in stuff. So the pool of people who will be innovative and take these kinds of things on is kind of unnaturally reduced in academia because of the context and the environment that we've set up. (RP7)

It would therefore be naïve to assert that academics engaged online are not aware of the power structures that preclude them from fully embracing their values and beliefs as digital scholars. What is often perplexing is their determination in pursuing digital practices against the stipulated

institutional and professional standards. This requires a good knowledge of the rules of the game that academia has become.

In general, higher education displays limiting structures that tend to prescribe not only the ways in which scholarship is conducted but also acknowledged, with academic institutions often avoiding any type of competitive disruption given their goal of maintaining or attaining ‘the power of prestige in the higher education marketplace’ (Christensen and Eyring 2011, p. 17). However, the struggle for academic status—institutional and individual—is far from being a recent phenomenon (see, e.g. *Homo Academicus*, Bourdieu 1988). Nonetheless, the neo-liberal state has come to exacerbate this by devising national exercises that evaluate the quality of institutional practice against traditional academic benchmarks. An example of this is the Research Excellence Framework (REF) that evaluates research practices of British universities. Such research assessment exercises regulate the research income universities are allocated annually from public funds. In the case of the UK, the research income each research institution receives is largely defined through the number of peer-reviewed articles researchers published in established research journals, a monopoly which was purchased and privatised by several printing houses during the 1960s and 1970s.

Similar exercises are conducted in other countries. For instance, the research assessment in Australia is performed through the Excellence for Research in Australia (ERA). Identical to the REF, it puts a strong focus on journal publications (Haslam and Koval 2010). New Zealand also has its own mechanism of measuring research through their Performance-Based Research Fund. It differs from the REF in the UK in that it targets individual academic researchers rather than disciplinary groups (Goldfinch 2003), a strategy they share with other countries, for example, Spain (Jimenez-Contreras et al. 2003) and South Africa where ‘preference will be given to those articles which are published in journals of recognised prestige’ (ibid., 135). Such exercises inevitably tend to lead to the change of publishing behaviours in favour of funding (Butler 2003) and status. Moreover, such evaluations seem to institutionalise research activity (Sanz-Menéndez 1995) as an exercise that aims at generating funding for institutions rather than pro-

moting new knowledge and debate. Academic freedom is therefore limited this way (Stella 2014, p. 105).

Smith et al. (2012) reflect on the threats such exercises pose to academic autonomy given the narrow notions of impact stipulated by research evaluation committees and interpreted by institutional leaders. The Research Excellence Framework in the UK is a good example of this, as presented in the narratives of this study. Bence and Oppenheim (2004) assert that such exercises ‘distort the patterns of academic publishing’ (p. 64). They also stifle innovation (Lucas 2006) and ‘damage scholarship’ (Williams 1998, p. 1081). National research evaluations lead institutions and individuals alike to devise strategies regarding what and where to publish (Talib 2001; Wellington and Torgeson 2005; Northcott and Linacre 2010) instead of seeking alternative channels to extend their influence to different audiences and/or exploit different forms of impact.

It is thus no wonder then that academic status is often achieved by abiding by such national research evaluation schemes which work as a mechanism of validation of practice. At stake is the research funding institutions receive based on the quality of their research (McNay 2003), a measure that is mainly construed through conventional research outlets such as the publication of articles in journals known for their high impact ranking. As a result, two topics seem to dominate the debate in academia: ‘financial constraint and quality assessment’ (Thomas 2001, p. 171).

Online, however, the activity of the digital scholar is characterised by a desire of contributing to intellectual debate and public knowledge via open and interactive means of communication, thus exemplifying a competing academic habitus (Costa 2014):

There has been a tension between the institutional expectation of what I should be doing—that is a research monograph on one particular topic—and where my intellectual journey is taking me, which is somewhere that is a lot more fascinating (...) intellectually, something that is a lot more timely [digital]. (RP1)

This alternative academic habitus is set by a collective schema of digital dispositions belonging to fellow academics engaged in similar digital approaches to knowledge work rather than emblematised of the values and vision of the institution:

My experience with my [university's] colleagues is that they're still thinking the same old same old.(...) Online I've got a global network of people who are interested in working broader. (RP4)

We're [digital scholars] a group of people who think about these kind of things [digital scholarship practices] seriously, so we can make a difference. (RP10)

Even though digital academic practices provide an alternative perspective on academic work, they are not considered a replacement by the institution which holds the power of legitimisation. Legitimisation as an ultimate form of institutional recognition is a great mechanism of control that can only be counteracted by a similar force of recognition. In the case of digital scholarship practices, this form of recognition is enacted by knowledge networks that converge online and share similar principles and practices, that is, dispositions. The mutual appreciation practised amongst digital peers becomes a driving force working alongside the academic field, thus attenuating its power as the only means of recognition. The result is a double act or the play of a 'double game' (RP10) as digital scholars develop 'a feeling for the game' (Bourdieu 1988), that is, they develop strategies that ensure their relevance in both fields of practice.

Developing a Feeling for the Academic Game

This dilemma between what academia expects and what the web allows tends to place those who question the doxa of academic work with digital practices at crosswords between what is required of them and what they understand their role to be as academics in a digital knowledge society. What this implies is a struggle between identity and status that often does not get resolved but which is reconciled through a conscious play of the game.

Even though academics' digital activities are often ignored by their institutions for its low impact outcome regarding their measurement of prestige, the same activity tends to be highly regarded by the knowledge networks and communities with which they engage online (Costa 2014).

This subjective type of recognition is not only important for their practice, but it is also a determinant to their convictions as knowledge workers in an environment influenced by the digital. What very quickly becomes clear is that scholars cannot, and do not want to, disregard the rules of one field in favour of another. This is so because in part academia as a formal field of practice still yields a preferred level of credibility when compared to the web, and because in part it is through the academy that academics can exert their authority as knowledge workers and intellectuals. So the game of prestige, that is, the practice and process of acquiring and accumulating symbolic capital with the support of their institution, is crucial for them to occupy a recognised position in the field of knowledge production and intellectual debate. At the same time, the web as an additional field of knowledge production with flexible or non-existent publishing gatekeepers provides them with a greater level of freedom and autonomy to exercise their voice in more popular formats. Hence, what we more often tend to observe is how individuals strategise their practice in and between the two spaces of action in order to remain relevant in both. Such approach is a conscious and continuous (re)negotiation between occupying a reputable institutional space and keeping true to their values as digital scholars.

Speaking from a theory of action perspective, we can assert that academics' experiences on the web, as a field of practice, result in the transformation of their intellectual journeys. Their adoption of digital scholarship practices not only set them apart from other academics who follow the conventions of the academy, but it also reveals that the 'differences between individual *habitus* lie in the singularity of their social trajectories' (Bourdieu 1999, p. 60).

Digital scholar's professional identities are engendered in a dual *habitus* as reflected in their practices and attitudes towards the two fields in which their practices are conducted and substantiated. Even though academia holds the power of official legitimation, the web enables scholars with immediate and informal recognition of their contributions. Even though the former field is protected by its symbolic capital, the latter is supported and instigated by deviant social capital. The coexistence of the two fields is not a clear clash, but it is also not a neat convergence.

Scholars' exposure to different types of recognition—official and informal, that is, institutional and peer-to-peer—weakens the role of academia in asserting its power as the dominant mechanism of academic recognition. Peer recognition, that is, digital scholars' social capital online—working as an unofficial form of acknowledgement in the background—can act as a kind of antidote against the formal recognition apparatus set in academia. It is at this stage that Bourdieu's theory, although insightful, becomes short-handed. Bourdieu's understanding of practice via a structure-agency dialectics can only stretch as far as to explain the complex relationship between scholars' practices on the digital and in opposition to academia. Axel Honneth's critical proposal of 'recognition struggles' offers complementary conceptions given his focus on the inter-subjective relationships between actors and the effects these relationships can have on a field of practice.

Digital Scholarship—Recognition or Disrespect of Academic Work?

Although digital scholarship practices are often depicted as being in conflict with institutional power, they are also characterised as a grassroots movement wanting to assert a new type of academic work, one that is digital and founded on principles of open and networked knowledge (see, e.g. Weller 2014). Associated with this moral compass of making intellectual work a public good online is the redefinition of academics' professional practices and identities, more precisely the contrast of their academic individuality and autonomy with the imperatives of a prestige economy emblematic of the institutions that subsidise their work. This type of struggle is nothing new to feminist academics (see, e.g. Thwaites and Pressland 2016), who have for decades expressed their concerns regarding the progressive loss of academic freedom. On the one hand, the misrecognition of digital scholarship practices by the institution comes to accentuate that perception. Yet, when recognition is given as a form of solidarity, then the fight is not completely lost. It is in this sense that Axel Honneth's works offer a useful perspective.

In his reconstruction of a Hegelian theory of recognition for a liberal society, Honneth (1995) posits that the importance of recognition lies in ‘the development of identity and self-realisation’ (Murphy 2010, p. 6). He categorises three modes of recognition—love, rights, and solidarity—which are interrelated to three elements of intersubjective practice, that is, of the self: self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem. These elements are crucial in the development of autonomous practice (Anderson and Honneth 2005) as a social process in which the association with the relevant other is regarded as a form of mutual recognition and where the opposite is experienced as a form of disrespect (Honneth 2007).

This is apparent in the experiences reported by digital scholars whose scholarship practices are validated by their digital scholar peers who share a similar value system with regard to their scholarly practice. This peer validation forms not only a mechanism of interpersonal recognition but also one of resistance—with some degree of success—against the system of formal legitimation, that is, the institution (e.g. see Table 1). Recognition is thus not solely determined by power and status—what Bourdieu calls ‘symbolic capital’—because it can also be achieved by shared values and social cooperation (Honneth 2004), that is, solidarity (Huttunen and Murphy 2012). It becomes a form of recognising and

Table 1 The structures of relations of recognition (of digital scholarship) adapted from Honneth (1995, p. 129)

| Modes of recognition | Emotional support (love, care) | Cognitive respect (legal rights and responsibilities) | Social esteem (solidarity) |
|---|--|---|---|
| Relation to self | Self-confidence | Self-respect | Self-esteem |
| Forms of recognition (of digital scholarship practices) | Shared online experiences and practices (network interactions, exchange of ideas, collaboration, etc.) | Membership in a digital collective; engagement in digital scholarship practices | Shared traits and abilities; moral values |
| Forms of disrespect (of digital scholarship practices) | Disregard for the digital and the scholarly practices therein developed | Indifference or disinterest for what digital scholars try to achieve | Disagreement with the principles underpinned by digital scholarship practices |

holding power (ReSisters 2017) in an extended academic space that the web can be. It is precisely this particular type of recognition that encourages and keeps academics engaged in digital scholarship practices, and at the same time it creates the dilemma of moving between two different approaches to scholarly practice.

Counterposing the idea of social recognition however is a sense of misrecognition implicitly imposed by those who do not share the same value system or practices. The feeling that derives from this moral and/or practical misalignment is a feeling of disrespect and injustice ‘measured in terms of the withholding of some recognition held to be legitimate’ (Honneth 2004, p. 352). This feeling of disrespect becomes a social struggle derived from a desire for acceptance as a form of interpersonal recognition. It is this lack of mutuality between academics exercising digital scholarship practices and those engaged in traditional academic approaches that creates the separation between the two, a separation that is encouraged by the norms that typify their institutions.

Individuals develop their identity in relation to their social circles—digital or not—and the values and moral responsibilities practised therein. In the case of digital scholars, their practices may not be fully appreciated within a more traditional academe, but as they are esteemed by social groups driven by a similar set of values, that is, other academics engaged in digital practices, their practices and professional identity are not totally discarded. What becomes then clear is that digital scholarship practices do not simply represent a struggle with academic conventions, they also are a ‘form of recognition found in communities of value’ (Honneth 1996, p. 111). Hence the struggle digital scholars are engaged with is not merely one related to acquiring recognition for their digital practices, but rather of negotiating what constitutes academic work. The academy as a marketplace where academic practice is judged against a competitive culture of prestige is driven and dominated by economic goals and not by intellectual values, with knowledge being regarded as a commodity and not as a public good (see Thwaites and Pressland 2016, p. 2).

As long as digital scholarship practices lie at the margins of what is acceptable and valid in higher education, digital scholars will tend to orient their practices towards the demands of both fields by virtue of remaining relevant in the field that substantiates their academic work (academia)

while at the same time keeping true to their commitment to a much far-reaching form of scholarship enabled by the digital. The predicament here is not only defined by a sense of displacement of the habitus—which Bourdieu anticipates when the field clashes with the dispositions that typify an individual's practice—but also characterised by a sense of social (in)justice within and between two different communities of scholars engaged in knowledge work. What these two distinctive communities of scholars do is to counterbalance each other in that what one disrespects as scholarship practices the other identifies as a valuable academic contribution.

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