RESISTING NEOLIBERALISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION VOLUME I

Seeing Through the Cracks

Edited by Dorothy Bottrell
and Catherine Manathunga

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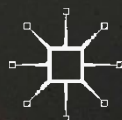
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Editors

Resisting Neoliberalism in Higher Education Volume I

Seeing Through the Cracks

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Foreword

Step on a crack, break your mother's back. (From an old children's game)

The Soviet dissident poet and essayist Joseph Brodsky once said, "No man-made system is perfect, and the system of oppression is no exception. It is subject to fatigue, to cracks, which you are the likelier to discover the longer your term."[1] Like a prison, the perverted logic of neoliberalism has captured the world. Nowhere is this more evident than in what we often refer to as the neoliberal university. Ensconced in a dehumanizing ethos of free market supremacy, social surveillance, and community shattering individualism, the cracks are not always easy to decipher. And even when the cracks become visible, it is not surprising that university professors and researchers often respond like domesticated children who must avoid the cracks in the sidewalk for fear it *will break their mother's back*. Here, the great parent is the university industrial complex, which has unfolded a wretched instrumentalizing nightmare of marketization and accountability schemes meant to ensure that higher education fulfill its role as a roaring economic engine and military aegis of the capitalist class.

As such, the hegemonic culture of neoliberalism, predicated on a system of scathing competition, has deeply reinforced the global fear of scarcity, as well as obsessive preoccupation with ranking criteria, warning "underdeveloped" universities (like countries) that they will be left behind, if they do not acquiesce to neoliberal demands of a globalizing

institution. This is effectively proliferated through an authoritarian culture of so-called managerial transparency, accountability measures, and austerity policies within schools and society that promote the casualization of labor, emaciation of faculty governance over their labor, and diminishment of job security. This is most prevalent among university staff and faculty whose expertise lies outside the margins of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), where three-quarters of grants and fellowship monies are now consolidated, leaving programs in the humanities—where critique of the cracks is more likely—impoverished.

Resisting Neoliberalism in Higher Education accurately signals where the cracks exist within the system of higher education and how these are continuing to grow and deepen. As in the childhood game, generally we are conditioned to believe that these cracks are to be avoided, suggesting that danger lurks in its recesses. Speaking metaphorically, to *step on the cracks* in today's neoliberal context is often met with a threat of loss of future opportunities, resources, and recognition. Shrouding these cracks is often mainstream apologia, dispensed by liberal and conservatives alike, with sunny assertions, for example, of improving economy and global well-being. Yet, in light of the three decades of growing consolidation of global wealth among a tiny minority, debilitating forms of racialization including mechanisms of social control and burgeoning incarceration, ghastly rates of unemployment and underemployment among even educated populations, persistent impoverishment among millions of people worldwide, and degradation of the environment, the abiding question this volume tackles is: Neoliberalism in the interest of whom?

An Act of Love and Political Resistance

If they cannot love and resist at the same time, they probably will not survive. (Audre Lorde 1984)[2]

In many ways, this volume evolved from a deeply communal process, where radical academic discussions among colleagues about a pedagogy of love and the struggle for survival within the entanglements of higher education resulted in a collective decision to write a book together that would speak to the travesties they and their students were enduring within the

toxic environment of the neoliberal university. Hence, the book was produced as a political act of love and resistance for their survival as teachers, scholars, and public intellectuals. The notion of love and resistance is vital here, in that the roots of our political resistance against those academic conditions that erode our humanity must be understood as emanating from our love for ourselves, one another, and the world. This powerful expression of love, as a life affirming political force, can be sensed here in the philosophies of resistance and the emancipatory initiatives proposed for community empowerment within higher education and beyond. Furthermore, whether authors are challenging the casualization of labor, neoliberal marketization of the curriculum, unjust meritocratic schemes, the persistence of patriarchy, the politics of social class formation, or the persistence of colonialism, their ideas emerge from a profound sense of historical necessity. Similarly, their theorizing is guided by a tenacious spirit, which seeks to teach, write, speak, and survive—with both integrity and humanity intact—despite the oppressive social and political forces that defile our revolutionary dreams.

A pedagogy of love, in the pedagogical tradition of Paulo Freire,[3] is very much at the core of *Resisting Neoliberalism in Higher Education.* Grounded in lived personal experience, decolonizing research, and political activism, Bottrell and Manathunga have skillfully brought together a collection of essays that deliberately and unapologetically tackle the cracks in the oppressive system of academic neoliberalism and, by so doing, discern the manner in which the once more liberal university project of the 60s and 70s was captured and is being held in chains, by the impunity and greed of an economic Darwinist ideal[4]—an ideal effectively orchestrated and deployed for almost forty years by the wretched opportunism of neoliberal discourses. By carefully examining their Australian university context, the authors powerfully shed light on the variety of fissures that have been created by the ideological pressures at work within the so-called global university; fissures which threaten the very existence of democratic life. Here the glorification of entrepreneurialism, for example, as the great panacea for equality is exposed as an economic political swindle of the powerful and wealthy, designed, wittingly or unwittingly, to derail the radical historical momentum for cultural democracy waged internationally within the university and the larger society during anti-imperialist struggles and the civil rights era of an earlier time.

In forthright and innovative ways, the perspectives formulated across the chapters provide glimpses into the shrouded toxicity of higher educa-

tion, as the repressive culture of academic neoliberalism is systematically unveiled—*from outside-in and inside-out*—with an eye toward political resistance and transformation. Here the cracks in the current system of oppression become promising places of possibility, where the light of humanity still beckons us toward a more just and loving world. With this in mind, the authors walk boldly across the fire of hegemonic constraints and contradictions to address what Freire called limit-situations,[5] from whence they, as teachers, writers and activists, can both resist and struggle to transform the authoritarian conditions that threaten to disable or obliterate emancipatory forms of university life.

These powerful discussions reflect on the ways in which critical educators have sought to defy the normalization of the neoliberal academy, by positing political and pedagogical challenges and establishing counterhegemonic spaces to defy "a logic of seeing ourselves as brands, cost centres, and purveyors of education and research." In this way, these radical educators, scholars, and activists are laboring to resist and disrupt the perversions of corporate managerialism in the university, as they cast a critical eye toward emancipatory possibilities and initiatives that counter the economic essentialism that undergirds the quantophrenic neoliberal madness associated with teaching, research, and service today.

The Struggle for Cultural Democracy

> *There can be no true exploration of cultural democracy without the acknowledgement that hierarchies of cultural value have always been, and always will be, imbricated in questions of power and authority…* (Hadley and Belfiore 2018)[6]

With an overarching commitment to discover and unveil the cracks, this timely book redefines academic scholarship as a political force for resistance and a mighty harbinger for a culturally democratic world. The volume speaks to the cracked continuities and discontinuities as these relate to the struggle for cultural democracy with the university. This approach seems fitting, given the manner in which institutional concerns for diversity have been railroaded and overturned by the "flat world" pretenses of neoliberalism, which over the last several decades has rendered critical dialogue about cultural differences irrelevant, ignoring the conflictual tensions arising within

repressive academic contexts that demand assimilation. Nevertheless, Bottrell and Manathunga rightly affirm that the commitment to liberation still persists alive and well in the cracks and continues to provoke critical interrogations about the politics of democracy and education, social justice, cultural self-determination, community solidarity, and social transformation.

Throughout the book one can sense, despite authors' various topics and differences, a resounding collective call to action—for it is only through collective action that the oppressive system of the university—*subject to fatigue, to cracks*—can be effectively dismantled and justly reinvented. Such a transformation entails, first of all, recognizing the ever-present and inseparable relationship between culture and power[7] and its implication for rethinking questions of authority and freedom in our labor as educators, writers, activists, and public intellectuals. Ontologically and epistemologically, we are reminded of the need for respect for the expression of cultural integrity and diversity; the significance of critical consciousness to our pedagogical and scholarly efforts; the on-going need to grapple with difficult questions of class, gender, and racialized privilege; and the indisputable necessity for the redistribution of power, land, and wealth across oppressed populations—populations for whom the promise of cultural democracy has for too long remained deferred, by the persisting coloniality of power in Australia and around the world.

Reclaiming Our Humanity

We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist. (James Baldwin 2017)[8]

In light of the persistence of coloniality and economic apartheid around the world, *Resisting Neoliberalism in Higher Education* issues an overarching missive that knowledge produced within universities should above all serve in the interest of our humanity. In contrast to the toxic and dehumanizing impact of the neoliberal university, we must courageously set our sights toward reinventing the praxis of teaching and research within higher education. To do this requires critical evolution of how we define democratic principles of voice, participation, and solidarity; so that through our praxis, we come to challenge the historical and

contemporary roots of class, gendered, racialized, sexual, abled, and religious oppression that seek to foreclose our humanity.

The unquestionable message echoed here is that the underlying purpose of our labor in universities is to reclaim ourselves as subjects of history and makers of our own futures. This encompasses an incontrovertible political commitment to transform the lovelessness of neoliberal madness that daily assaults our freedom to learn, teach, and write openly; corrupting our political right to speak, to act, to live, and to exist authentically across our many cultural differences and, yes, even our disagreements. It is, therefore, our duty to resist, to seize control of our lives, and to steadfastly desist, with heart, and soul, the epistemological and economic tyrannies that alienate and erode our humanity. Heralded by this collective labor of love are dynamic possibilities for social change that invite us to rethink or to remember why we chose to become university workers in the first place—our unshakable belief that from deep in the cracks *another world is indeed possible*!

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Notes

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Notes on Contributors

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Dorothy Bottrell is Honorary Senior Lecturer at the School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, Australia and casual HDR Supervisor at Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia. Her research interest in critical studies in higher education centres on academic resilience and she has published widely on resilience in youth and education studies.

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Barbara M. Grant is an academic at the University of Auckland in Aotearoa New Zealand. Working in the School of Critical Studies in Education, she researches – and, as often as she can, teaches and supervises – in the broad field of critical university studies. Her research has focused on doctoral education, especially the pedagogy of supervision, as well as a wide range of other aspects of academic identity and work. Currently she is researching academic identity through the practices of doctoral acknowledgment writing and doctoral publishing as well as undertaking a longitudinal ethnography of supervision as a form of academic work.

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Maree Keating develops academic language and literacy resources and supports students' academic skill development in vocational, undergraduate and postgraduate programs at Swinburne University. Her background is in teaching in Australian school and vocational education sectors, managing international development programs in Asia and Africa and publishing on issues of gender, community education and work. Maree's research explores access and equity in Australian work and education and the inter-relationships between gender, work and organisational culture. From 2011–2017 she co-ordinated the Master of Communication at Victoria University, and conducted national research to enhance the learning experiences of Chinese international students in Australian universities.

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Catherine Manathunga is Professor of Education Research at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia. An historian who draws together interdisciplinary expertise to bring an innovative perspective to higher education research, she

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Dominic O'Donnell is a recent Honours graduate from the School of Communication and Arts at The University of Queensland. He currently works as a Research Assistant within the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne.

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Shedding Light on the Cracks in Neoliberal Universities

Dorothy Bottrell and Catherine Manathunga

Introduction

Under the ethos of neoliberalism, universities have been transformed. In Australia, the alignment of higher education provision with neoliberalism began in the 1980s, as successive governments advocated the need to boost efficiencies, productive competition and public accountability, all deemed lacking within the system of university self-governance.[1] The economic logic of reform ran counter to dominant conceptions of universities as collegial institutions concerned with public and democratic

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purposes.[2] The dominance of market-driven business models instituted by governments through regulatory regimes and a volatile, mainly lean or declining funding policy environment has similarly reshaped higher education in variegated yet consistent ways in the global north and south.[3]

Twenty years of scholarship on the neoliberalisation of higher education has captured its features in designations such as the *corporate*[4] or *enterprise* university,[5] the *entrepreneurial* university[6] and the overarching descriptor, the *neoliberal* university.[7] All universities are now entrenched in *academic capitalism,*[8] internally distorted by an *audit culture*[9] and governed by *managerialism* that is intensified in internal conflicts over the purpose and conditions of academic work.[10] These shifts and their collateral damage to academic autonomy and professional standing are captured in new designations of the *measured* university[11] and the *toxic* university.[12]

However, there are *cracks* in the neoliberal university that still present opportunities for academics to pursue alternative priorities, resistances and refusals.[13] Seeing through neoliberalism is anchored in the strong traditions and values of academic freedom, autonomy, participatory and cultural democracy and the public good. In this book, as Readings[14] noted, 'dwelling in the ruins' of the university is our starting-point for interrogating, understanding and articulating new ways of seeing the substance and politics of change.

Resisting neoliberalism in higher education: seeing through the cracks and a second volume, on *prising open the cracks*, aim to shed light on how academics are surviving neoliberal changes and working the spaces[15] of managed life in universities. We use the metaphor of *seeing through the cracks* to emphasise the diminished space of "traditional" academic purposes within neoliberalised universities. It references the double meaning of academics seeing neoliberal and authoritarian managerialist processes for what they are; and articulating how we are continuing to find spaces to work in collegial ways that defy neoliberal logic: that is, a logic of bringing closure to non-economic aims of academic work[16]; a logic of seeing ourselves as brands, cost centres and purveyors of education and research.

This collection furthers our understanding of current trends in working conditions under corporate managerialism in higher education in diverse

contexts, with a focus on teaching-research-service academic work alongside critical responses and initiatives. This chapter provides a brief account of how the books came about, then discusses some key features of the increasingly ruthless managerialism that drives universities' internal reshaping of academic work. We then place our focus on resisting neoliberalism within the tradition of critical studies in higher education and explain how seeing through the small "window" of free education in Australia situates our view of academic work. Finally, we introduce the chapters of this volume, organised around the themes of seeing outside-in and inside-out. Throughout this chapter, we refer to 'the university' as a shorthand for the diversity of institutions and to emphasise that our concerns are connected into ongoing struggles over the idea of the university.[17]

Back Story

As our initial work on this volume was conducted in Melbourne, Australia, we respectfully acknowledge the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are traditional custodians of these lands and have been for many centuries. We pay respect to the deep knowledge embedded within the Aboriginal community and unique role of the Kulin Nation's living culture in the life of this region. Thinking about the transformation of universities, the cultural protocol of Acknowledgement of Country brings to the fore questions of power, privilege, equity. The colonial establishment of Eurocentric universities deliberately excluded Indigenous people, their knowledge, science and culture[18] and thus entailed the "logic of elimination"[19] that undergirded genocidal massacres, expropriation of lands and resources, Stolen Generations and a school-to-prison pipeline, all carried into the present through widespread societal refusal to acknowledge systemic racism and White privilege. Because neoliberalism is built on structures accomplished through the dispossession, colonisation and the empire building of industrial and corporate capitalism, the issues we raise concerning contemporary universities "must be understood within the context of historical struggles for voice, participation and self-determination"[20] that shaped contemporary universities and continues in the present.

This book and Volume II grew out of several research events conducted at local and national levels. These research activities were very much inspired by the opportunity to work with Professor Antonia Darder, an eminent critical theorist, Freirean scholar, activist and Leavey Endowed Chair of Ethics & Moral Leadership, Loyola Marymount University and Professor Emerita, University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign. As part of a Visiting Professorship at Victoria University, Melbourne, Antonia gave a keynote presentation on *The Legacy of Paulo Freire: The Continuing Struggle for Liberation* and facilitated research discussions at a one-day research symposium for academics, academic teaching scholars and PhD students in the Curriculum and Pedagogy as Complex Conversations (CPCC) Discipline Group. It was after listening to all of the presentations that one of our colleagues commented that we were all in some way engaged in 'rattling the cages' of the academy. This imagery of academics shaking the bars of the institution in protest at an increasing sense of imprisonment sparked the idea of an edited collection of essays about the ways in which our research was engaged in resisting neoliberalism in higher education.

This idea seemed to link very well with ongoing national discussions at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) about the state of Australian educational research. One of the dominant themes of the 2014 AARE/NZARE Conference in Brisbane was a feeling of grief that educational researchers were struggling to operate in a climate of funding cutbacks, persistent organisational restructuring and declining time for research and writing. In response, the AARE Professional and Higher Education Special Interest Group (SIG) invited a panel of speakers to offer provocations and insights about the troubled space of educational research at the 2015 AARE Conference. While the SIG convenors, Catherine Manathunga and Jan McLean, were convinced it was important to continue critical interrogations of the incursions of neoliberalism into education, the panel was designed to propose ways of moving beyond grief and mourning by investigating whether there were any generative spaces or *cracks* in neoliberalism that could be exploited in the fields of professional and higher education research. It seemed sensible to weave the emerging idea of an edited volume on resisting neoliberalism in higher education into these national debates.

So, when a group of academics from Victoria University had the privilege of joining Antonia Darder on a three-day Education Faculty retreat at Queenscliff by the sea south of Melbourne, we announced that plans were emerging in the CPCC Discipline Group, in collaboration with the AARE Professional Higher Education SIG, to produce an edited collection seeking to exploit generative spaces or cracks in neoliberal universities. Retreaters were invited to offer submissions for this collection and Antonia agreed to write a foreword for the volume. As we engaged in a series of creative, thought-provoking activities with Antonia designed to unearth issues of identity, culture, decolonising practice, critical pedagogy and liberation, we continued to think hard and write about what it meant to be involved in critical resistance to dominant neoliberal discourses in the academy. The proposed book was then discussed at the annual meeting of the AARE Professional and Higher Education SIG and a call for abstracts was issued through the SIG and international networks including those connected with the Academic Identities Conference series. There was such a response from colleagues around the world that the planned single volume became two volumes at the publisher's suggestion.

Neoliberal Managerialism

In this book we focus on how academics are negotiating the internal neoliberal reform of universities, primarily centred on managerialism, the top-down, hierarchical structure of governance and decision-making that is the typical business model adopted by universities.[21] Its predominant form is now line management, ensuring that hierarchical power resides with senior management and facilitates surveillance of academic work. Discussing the vast literature on managerialism is not possible here. Instead, we draw on the literature that articulates key features that we have recently observed and experienced.

Managerialism is both structure and modus operandi. The entrenchment of corporate structures in universities has produced new forms of class and 'rankism'[22] with rarely blurred lines between 'proletarian' academics[23] and the 'managerial elite'[24] who determine institutional strategic

aims, centred on world rankings and local market share. Vice-chancellors (VCs) are re-branded as CEOs and Presidents and are now more likely to be management careerists than academic leaders stepping up. Along with councils and swelling ranks of deputy and pro-VCs, they constitute a governing-strategist class, directing line management, assisted by expensive consultants and lawyers. Alongside their generous remuneration, disproportionate funding has been directed to growing the professional-administrative class.[25] This class includes designers and deliverers who serve the strategists and middle management (especially deans), developing the texts, processes and DIY requirements of policy, procedures, initiatives and audits passed down to academic labourers. In turn, academics are metrically positioned within a hierarchy of status according to managerial determinations of individual success and value to institutional prestige. As institutional "units", academics are readily discarded in ruthlessly pursued restructures deemed necessary for the achievement of *the university's* strategic goals (academics are frequently excluded from strategic discourse, especially the "we" of *the university*), presented within narratives of budgetary constraints and the needs of budget surplus. At the bottom of the hierarchy, casuals, temporary and short contract academics are now typically hired to replace discarded staff deemed excess.

As modus operandi, defining features of managerial regimes include an obsession with academic performance, productivity and their measurement and surveillance through numerous forms of accountability.[26] Audit metrics now reach into every aspect of academic life but most effectually in relation to revenue raising research 'outputs' and 'quality' teaching 'inputs'. Workload allocation is a chief mechanism of academic performance and compliance. As Kenny and Fluck[27] point out, workload management was originally proposed as a protection from overwork yet increasing performance requirements are often decoupled from workload considerations as if all the invisible work that does not count in workload formulae has no bearing on "outputs". As line managers "negotiate" (enforce) workload systems, "words like 'equity', 'transparency' and 'fairness' are trotted out",[28] but analyses of workload configurations point to arbitrary and inequitable allocations. For example, Papadopoulos[29] found academics' experience of workload models and the actuality of the work

(including increased volume of work, enlarged class sizes, development of online studies, unrealistic time allocations for teaching preparation and coordination roles, arbitrary additions to individual responsibilities) fell well short of meeting enterprise agreements' criteria of transparent, reasonable and equitable allocation. Papadopoulos concludes that the gap between model and practice constitutes workload allocations as *mismeasures* of academic work. Hil[30] argues that managers nonetheless "have a stake in ensuring that this empirical device exists, primarily because it allows them to monitor academic staff to the nth degree."

While top-down messages perpetually call for greater productivity, what this means for academics is generally "doing more with less".[31] Kinman[32] summarises the most stressful demands including "long working hours, administrative load, providing academic and pastoral support, complying with quality assurance procedures, pressure to obtain research funding and publish, and managing the volume of emails". These demands are stressful because they are meant to be accomplished despite the constraints of "ineffective management, lack of administrative and technical support, poor communication, rushed pace of work, frequent interruptions, role conflict and limited opportunities for teaching preparation, scholarly work and professional updating".[33]

Performance accountabilities based on the presumption of the need for greater productivity invisibilise the work that is not recognised in the workload device and that is subsumed into the hours of unpaid work performed. For example, a recent National Tertiary Education Union report[34] estimated that Australian university staff work 38 million hours of overtime per year, contributing $2.5 billion to the sector in necessary but unpaid labour. Furthermore, accountabilities based on financial objectives invisibilise the care, collegiality, and political work that inheres in teaching, research and service, work with support or administrative staff as well as professional associations and external communities, including creative and public intellectual work, robust debate, unionism and activism.[35]

How academics negotiate the ever-burgeoning performance requirements is highly differentiated according to position and continuing or casual status. In many universities, "cost-effective educational delivery" is driving the expansion of teaching-only positions and constitutes a

challenge to the normative model of teaching-research-service (professional and community engagement), as well as fundamental ideas and values premised on the reciprocal significance of research and teaching.[36] Casualisation naturalises the expectation of academic work as solely teaching, though there are additional threats to the principle of research as a vital component of academic work. Benchmarks for research output can and are formulated in ways that ensure a continuing reduction in research time. Teaching-research-service academics may struggle to meet grant funding targets, especially in teaching-first workloads, likely shifting them into a diminishing research allocation spiral[37] and providing the kind of data used to justify restricting research allocations to research-only positions. Within some universities teaching is being piled on while time allocated is reduced. This may occur, for example, through shifting postgraduate research supervision from research to teaching allocations or vice versa, with only superficial transparency in these processes.

Early career academics tend to be more vulnerable to exploitation and may find they need to be "super-heroes" to meet institutional expectations,[38] while those who feel comfortable with and are adept at self-promotion may win additional support within a 'stars' system of researcher prestige.[39] Members of the professoriate may accrue greater autonomy as leaders in their fields, though how they lead may place them at risk of losing academic freedom. Professors who use their status to act in solidarity with more junior academics, buffer them from the excesses of managerialism and aim to operate democratically and equitably "can also become targets of academic punishments, if they refuse to acquiesce or reform to neoliberal expectations – irrespective of the quantity, quality, or intellectual reach of their scholarship".[40]

It is unsurprising that academics may love teaching, research and community engagement while finding themselves/ourselves exhausted and questioning whether there is any such thing as work/life balance, whether we can survive the continual bombardment by email, endless forms, reports and "engagement" in strategic planning that is a tokenistic smoke-screen for our marginalisation from decision-making, and wondering what happened to the "dream job". Holding to our quality standards that centre on critical pedagogy, fair assessments, meaningful feedback and

time for students outside classes, while juggling research projects and writing deadlines is achieved at personal cost. Many academics have experienced the pressures, thwarted opportunities, punitive accountabilities, and downright bullying of managerialism with increased anxiety, cynicism concerning procedural fairness and fear.[41] Feminist research has highlighted detrimental impacts on personal-professional wellbeing in survivalism, anxieties, ambivalent and fraught emotional labour[42] that has been accompanied by a diminishing assertion of intellectual desire and pleasure.[43] It is at this level of lived experience that we clearly see the "ontoformative" dimensions[44] of managerialism in intersection with neoliberalism's economic, political, ideological and governmental dimensions[45] and subjectivities that are "the starting point for a politics of refusal".[46]

Critical University Studies

The Idea of the University

We locate our two volumes within the field of Critical University Studies (CUS). This literature sits within a broader body of work on the idea of the university. There is no space in this chapter to review the whole history of ideas about the university starting, as most of this literature does, with 12th century Europe and working forward to Cardinal Newman and so on. This body of work is also narrow in its geographical scope, focusing largely on Europe and North America (eg. Perkin[47]). Eurocentric Enlightenment arguments are made that dismiss the significance of Confucian, Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Aztec and Incan and Japanese institutions of higher learning as teaching "high culture, received doctrine, literary and/or mathematical skills of their political or religious masters, with little room for questioning or analysis".[48] Pre-12th century European 'monastic schools' are dismissed in a similar manner and no reference is made to the role of universities in the "destruction of the medieval world order at the Reformation".[49] Much is made of the ongoing survival and spread of European universities around the globe via colonisation and the role these institutions had in anticolonial

independence movements in the 'developing' world.[50] There is little reference to the earliest universities in Africa such as Karawiyyinn in Fez (Morocco)[51] and none to Indigenous institutions of higher learning around the globe such as the Whare-wānanga of the Māori people in Aotearoa New Zealand.[52] No reference is made to the destruction of these ancient institutions of higher learning by the forces of European colonisation. This literature is also highly gendered, referencing the ideas and deeds of great white men and ignoring the contributions of women to the production and dissemination of knowledge within universities.

In these volumes we aim to contribute to 'critical university studies' which Jeffrey Williams[53] describes as "a new wave of criticism of higher education", particularly from the 1990s to the present. Some scholars, particularly in the US and Canada, take a wider paradigmatic view of it and incorporate all of critical and poststructural theory within it.[54] For example, Petrina and Ross,[55] celebrating the 15th anniversary of the US journal *Workplace: A Journal for Academic Labor*, speak of more than a century of first and second wave CUS that has been concerned with preserving academic freedom and the fluctuations in paid intellectual or academic work. We particularly link our work with the critical policy studies of the university by scholars such as Sheila Slaughter and Larry Leslie[56] and Bill Readings[57] in the US, Raewyn Connell,[58] Bronwyn Davies and colleagues[59] and Simon Marginson and Mark Considine[60] in Australia and Stephen Ball[61] in the UK. We also stand with scholars who have expanded the idea of the critical through the development of feminist-intersectional, queer, postcolonial, Indigenous, anticolonial, critical race, and critical participatory and disability studies. Critical University Studies is significantly enriched by the many contributions of Māori and Aboriginal scholars, especially on Kaupapa Māori research and decolonising methodologies[62] and Moreton-Robinson's[63] Critical Indigenous Studies that deconstructs and theorises the "possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty" in Foucaultian and Whiteness Studies.

The field of critical university studies is an interdisciplinary space incorporating scholars from education, history, sociology, literary, cultural and labour studies.[64] Breaking this label down, Williams[65] argues that this work is 'critical' because it takes an "oppositional stance" to the operations of power and injustice evident in contemporary neoliberal

universities. It focuses on the 'university' because it explores 'the idea of the university' as well as the "actual practices and diverse institutions of contemporary higher education" and it is a form of interdisciplinary 'studies', interrogating both the cultural representations of the university and its material realities.[66] The field of Critical Pedagogy and Freirean scholarship[67] has been influential in progressing such aims, tracing how universities have become a "a site of struggle between private commercial interests"[68] and older discourses about the public good. Giroux defines critical pedagogy as more than method or practices; but rather, as "a political and moral project [that] illuminates the relationships among knowledge, authority, and power [and] how knowledge, identities, and authority are constructed within particular sets of social relations".[69] He argues that critical pedagogy is always concerned with enhancing individual and social agency. For academics, critical work often involves moving beyond the academy into the public domain and engaging in scholarly activism or what Petrina calls "scholactivism"[70] and public intellectual work. Williams also argues that critical university studies incorporates "teach[ing] the university" or actively "foregrounding the literary, cultural and social history of the university"[71] in our courses (and in academic development) through the critical exploration of philosophical ideas about the university; of the history of the university (and one that goes beyond a Eurocentric myopia incorporating Europe and North America only unlike much of the literature including Williams[72]); of fiction about the university and of university and government policy documents, reports, statistics and so on. This would also involve getting students (and indeed academics) to examine their own campuses.[73] Applying these ideas to Southern, postcolonial contexts, Sturm[74] illustrates how this would incorporate exploring the Indigenous histories of the land on which universities stand as well as their colonial and present landscapes and trajectories.

Resistance

It is in the context of CUS that we place our understanding of resistance to neoliberalism in universities. In the literature, academic resistance is

theorised from diverse critical perspectives and mainly focuses on contestation of the idea of the university (e.g., opposition to the commodification of education), and ways in which academics refuse the excesses of managerialism through struggle over academic identity, autonomy and 'everyday' self-management.

Anderson[75] draws on Foucaultian, cultural, labour process and organisational studies of resistance, emphasising technologies of power and subjectivities in academic resistance and on Scott's[76] anthropological and historical studies of the "hidden transcripts" of everyday, routine and subtle discursive and enacted resistances that sometimes opens to more public protest. Anderson[77] identified forms of academic resistance including critical intellectual and political work, formal protest and tactics of refusal and partial compliance effective in subverting managerial micro-aggressions and colonisation of critical academic identities. Heath and Burdon's[78] analysis of academic resistances also draws on Foucault's account of resistance in formations of power that is constantly "undermined and re-formed by the resistance of active agents". They argue that subjective and collective activism involves refusal of dominant discourses (e.g., individualism) that operate managerial power. Feldman and Sandoval[79] argue that collective resistance, including union actions, feminist writing collectives and 'alternative' cooperative universities, holds greater prospects of change than individualised resistance concerned with coping and finding ways to work the system, doing little to change it.

The prominence of 'everyday' academic resistance also reflects the weakening of labour movements that has been a ubiquitous feature of neoliberalisation.[80] Labour process resistances such as 'work to rule', strikes and picketing remain part of the academic repertoire and critical scholarship retains a transformative (institutional and societal) platform though collective resistance now more commonly appears progressive or prefigurative than revolutionary. Heath and Burdon[81] draw on prefigurative politics of 1960s social movements, highlighting how academics "create the conditions necessary to conceptualise different futures and acquire the skills needed to bring them about," especially through collegial processes.[82] They argue that larger transformative projects may culminate from many nuanced and specific projects as well as selective

compliance with 'virtuous' changes handed down, entailing ethical and prefigurative forms of resistance. This, we will argue,[83] also entails conservation of long-held ideals of 'the university', as "one of the few spaces left where democratic identities, values and desires can be created".[84]

Feminism has always been inherently resistant in critiquing patriarchal power and politically prefigurative in effecting institutional change. For example, the 'second wave' women's liberation movement gave rise to countering sexist culture across institutions, including sexual divisions of labour 'hidden' in the private realm of families and households, and subsequently inside the state in public service and in education. Indigenous activists were also vocal in the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, resisting "mainstream" history, politics and institutional racism. The politics of self-determination included prefigurative resistance; for example, in taking over the leadership of organisations such as the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship, the Freedom Ride's public consciousness-raising and challenge to racial segregation and creation of community-controlled services.[85]

However, critics of prefigurative politics have also argued that transformative resistances are also necessary within social movements, against the fragmentation of ideals into apolitical projects and because the vision may mask inequalities embedded within the movement.[86] In particular, feminist, postcolonial and intersectional theories have complicated the structural analyses of oppression that underpinned earlier movements, bringing focus to the interlocking of class and patriarchy with racialization and heteronormativity[87] and clarifying the need for multi-directional modes of resistance. Academic resistance may then take form in "multidimensional praxis"[88] within "relationships of solidarity … anchored upon ongoing genuine exchanges of both lived and formally studied knowledge",[89] with our colleagues and within external collective projects.

Lugones' metaphor of 'standing in the cracks' speaks to these shifts and shifting resistances. She argues that liberatory work addressing multiple oppressions demands a prefigurative politics operating on multiple levels, linking the personal, social and institutional. She proposes "antistructural understandings of selves, relations, and realities… as a way to think of resisters to structural, institutionalized oppressions".[90] Lugones argues that

resistances are then not merely reactive but emerge prefiguratively in "the tensions, desires, closures, cracks, and openings that make up the social".[91]

Seeing Through the Cracks

In our CPCC Discipline Group discussions of the idea of "seeing through the cracks", we talked about academic work in the context of unmitigated managerialism and the fractures we observed between our understanding of the purposes of academic work and those articulated in the corpspeak that now announced top-down strategies, reconfiguring our work. We also discussed how past and present experience of universities shaped our understanding of what a university education could and should mean. For some of the group, the aim of shedding light on these issues brought to mind the familiar lyrics of Leonard Cohen's *Anthem*: "There's a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in".[92] We had first listened to Leonard Cohen as undergrads, and his bittersweet reflection on life as imperfect yet cause for optimism mingled with the memory of deep and intoxicating conversations at union nights and intimate tutorials (unlike the large classes we now worked with). We would not have been undergrads without the Whitlam Labour government's abolition of tuition fees and introduction of student allowances. Our presence reflected the expansion of higher education that welcomed working-class students.

We see the "window" of the 70s to mid-80s as a small crack in universities' elite tradition, on the back of a decade of widespread social change engendered through mobilisations against the Vietnam war, Aboriginal movements that achieved franchise, Freedom Rides, the broader land rights and Black Power campaigns including the Tent Embassy at the Australian national parliament and Aboriginal-controlled organisations,[93] anti-apartheid, the first migrant resource centres and movements around multiculturalism and 'second-wave' feminism. We were the beneficiaries of the work done by feminist, Marxist, socialist, postcolonial, gay liberation and disciplinary 'radicals' (eg in philosophy, history and education) in establishing a raft of new subject areas such as Women's Studies, Aboriginal Studies and burgeoning "critical" studies that were indicative of the press for equality. There was consciousness of White privilege and

institutional racism emerging in some corners, influenced by external politics including Aboriginal women's critiques of White, middle-class feminism.[94] In this period, alliances were focused both inwardly, aiming to re-shape the university and outwardly by linking with professional groups (eg feminist teaching networks) and movements for social change and social justice. Our personal investment in education was reinforced by open debates around class and sexual politics on campus, including in lecture theatres and tutorials. Even while we harboured similar fears about being imposters and out of our place that working-class feminist academics have written about,[95] our personal aspirations found a place to be realised because the political conditions of the university and academics' politics enabled them.

Universities were far from bastions of equality, but they were sites of struggle where the purposes of learning, knowledge and research could safely be contested. Alliances of 'radical' students and staff did prise open the power blocs of academic boards and professoriates and gained a level of participatory democracy.[96] Naturalised privilege gave way to more representative governance, incorporating principles of academic freedom, autonomy and accountability from below. Participatory and democratic aims were enmeshed with more traditional institutional ideals of education, knowledge production, debate and dialogue, around contested and shared agenda related to public interests and distribution of public goods and benefits.[97] With a visible openness to questioning whose public interests were served by higher education and experiments in how knowledge making and institutional decision-making might be more participatory, this period stands in contrast to the elite tradition of universities and the often token 'inclusion' of the present.

Feminist, queer and postcolonial scholarship continues to complicate class and identity politics embedded and forming through the hierarchical regimes of institutional power, yet there is little in the way of visible or collective democratisation on campus beyond what may be activated by individuals in the tutorial and teaching or research networks. Gender, Indigenous and 'diversity' work has been 'mainstreamed' in many ways and most universities have adopted "widening participation" strategies. However, the neoliberalisation of the university has and is re-making access, rights and equity in its own institutional image. The critical

resistances to elitism and challenges to knowledge ownership that created openings for cultural and workplace democracy are largely erased in contemporary equity strategies that like the rest of audit culture is focused on numbers and compliance. Rather than being a force for further democratisation, widening participation largely maps onto the templates of elitism within universities and reflects the growing rather than diminishing inequalities in civil society.[98]

While many caution against nostalgic comparisons and argue there was no "golden age" in universities, we believe that the dissonance we have encountered in becoming academics is a widely shared history and a necessary resource for questioning power, hierarchy and the closures being brought to workplace and cultural democracy. Historical perspective is critical to imagining "the university" and in our case it serves as an analytic lens for decoding/seeing through the current trends and practices of rampant managerialism. We believe this is necessary as foundational notions of the university as a key site of knowledge making through critical debate and for equitable social change and public good has, under neoliberalism, become "an alternative" or trivialised vision.[99] The dominant rationale of the neoliberal university is an economic project, articulated in narrow definitions of academic work, the instrumental value of study and dollar value of research impact. We believe there is a necessary place for nostalgia because we hold to participatory and democratic workplace goals that have been shaped by the past and are renewed continually as neoliberalism shapes our everyday labour. Historical perspectives are also important intergenerationally in order that younger academics may know that academic work and universities were not always what they are now. When managerialism is rampant and the workplace becomes toxic,[100] "nostalgia" is a political resource for coping, endurance and determination to find ways of enacting these fundamental beliefs.

Overview of the Chapters

The theme of "seeing through the cracks" is developed across this and the second volume. In Part I, *Seeing outside-in*, we use the metaphor to emphasise that academic work is misrecognised and not represented by

the public face of the university as conveyed in the rhetoric of university mission statements, glossy marketing, policies and strategies. Universities' website material makes inspiring claims about transformative directions, as inclusive and engaged agents of educational democracy and as embracing cultures of respect and care for students and staff. These chapters paint a picture of institutional life that seems a parallel universe. Behind the shiny public facade, we see how "traditional" aims are carelessly discarded by the hand of authoritarian managerialism.

The chapters in Part I elaborate on the intensification of academic work and accountabilities in administration, teaching and research. These chapters are autoethnographic, based on lived experience and/or fictionalised accounts of the everyday realities of academics. The authors use a range of analytic approaches to elaborate on the consequences of academic performative functionality in neoliberal universities. In Chap. 2, Roberto Bergami likens contemporary managerial structures to feudal hierarchies with authoritarian regimes ruling from afar and quashing dissent. He argues that rewards accrue to the nobles, and peasants and serfs' work conditions deteriorate as academics are marginalised from decision-making, managers tinker with "quality" and administration trumps teaching and research. In Chap. 3, Martin Andrew's depiction of deteriorated workplace relations takes us deep into a Dantean world. He draws on a medieval play to allegorise an autoethnography of changing academic identity. His study anatomises the "colliding and colluding" "double negative" of unmitigated neoliberal managerialism and workplace toxicity. The details of his journey to hell and back – and beyond – are compelling, alarming and familiar. From betrayal-born/e disillusionment, the academic moves to hope through self-severance and finding space in the "paraversity".

Some chapters speak to a neoliberal quashing of critical pedagogies and colonisation of academic time.[101] In Chap. 4, Mark Vicars employs the practice of parrhesia, to speak freely of rituals of power and psychological, social and emotional dis/ease that is personal and global. His re-stories of "truth, lies and make believe" reveal the damage done by rampant managerialism to teaching roles and relationships with students and colleagues. Managing unmanageable workload and administrative systems that do not work is met with indifference or insinuations of the academic just not

being up to scratch: "There is a sense of if you don't want to die doing your job then you are just not up to it." Mat Jakobi takes us on other "dark tours" in Chap. 5, examining the neoliberalisation and settler colonisation of Aboriginal standpoints in education. Based on his experience as a "dark tourist", visiting a site of genocide in Phnom Penh and similar dark tours of educational and social policy that have wrought great suffering of Aboriginal peoples, Mat analyses his work as an Aboriginal teacher educator in terms of the "dark tour guide". His examination of curriculum, pedagogy and accountabilities situated in whitestream educational commodification, massification and economies of trading the Other, reveals how mandatory Aboriginal studies become rushed "package-tours" and diminish the provocations of this critical work, the dark tour guide's self-determination and whitestream students and colleagues' movement beyond voyeurism. In Chap. 6, Barbara Grant troubles the idea of "career" with an entanglement of ambivalent steps toward, around, away from and not foreclosing the possibility of becoming professor. Barbara weaves "personal" and "tiny stories" with career "litany" and "a mash-up of Unholy Elements" to interrogate this ambivalence, her submission and refusal of academic norms, "treasuring the freedoms" of academic life, and not having it "sprawl into every corner" of her life.

All of these chapters speak to the changed and changing relationships between academics and management and the final chapter in this section (Chap. 7) elaborates on these relations in terms of "precarious management" and precarity in academic life. In the context of changing Nordic universities, Paola Valero, Kenneth Jørgensen and Kristiina Brunila's "Affective Subjectivation in the Precarious Neoliberal Academia" works with "fictional, realistic stories" that open up the "public secrets" of academic life. As people face "the firing squad", subsequent "stabilisation" of their departments by numbers and how-to guides for self-improvement, the authors show how there is a constant ambivalence between anxiety and self-development in the creating of neoliberal subjects through affective subjectivation.

While the chapters in Part I also reveal generative spaces to think and act outside the containment of managerialism and performativity, this is the main focus of the chapters in Part II. In *Seeing inside-out,* contributors further detail constraints of audit managerialism and reveal cracks

between neoliberal spaces of closure and openness. In this context, Dorothy Bottrell and Maree Keating argue in Chap. 8, for a critical resilience that is concerned with surviving managerialism and sustaining political purposes. Critical resilience derives support in collegial groups, feminist networks and union involvement. The value of collective work and voices threads through the chapters in Part II.

The politics of creative 'frictions' are analysed in Chap. 9, with accounts of the project, *Courting Blakness: Recalibrating Knowledge in the Sandstone University* by the curator and influential contemporary artist Fiona Foley, academics Fiona Nicoll (project manager) and Zala Volcic and student volunteer and archivist, Dominic O'Donnell. The large-scale, multidimensional project was a powerful statement of Indigenous sovereignty and a unique resource for the university and broader public. The frictions encountered in mounting the project speak to the racialised politics of university power-brokerage and navigating tensions between "social justice and colonial state control; between collective service and individual achievement in a highly competitive research environment; between visions of education as a private and a public good; and between more or less contained and containing visions of the socially transformative potential of Indigenous art".

In Chap. 10, Peter Westoby and Lynda Shevellar's work in community development orients their methodology of listening to first and second stories of moving beyond survivalism in the managerial academy. Informed by Biradi's theory of colonising the soul and Rose's governing the soul, their everyday academic work navigates suffering through "delicate activism" to generative spaces for further agentic resistances. In Chap. 11, Katarina Tuinamuana, Robyn Bentley-Williams and Joanne Yoo reflect on their involvement in a women's writing group that "hijacked" an "act of compliance" with the research accountability regime. This was a creative feminist space in which to explore the "invisible" work of writing and a generative "third space of collaboration and collegiality".

Chapters 12, 13, and 14 explore the generative spaces of activist work in teacher education. Mary Weaven (Chap. 12) discusses the cultural value of poetry in society and specifically in pre-service teacher education, adopting a Freirean approach to literacy as praxis, in resistance to

the narrow standards and testing approach now normative. Her reflective analysis shows not only the power of poetry to move people but how the juxtaposition of approaches opens students' understanding of how neo-liberalism works in education and the teaching profession. Claire Kelly's Chap. 13, reflects on an activist career in teaching, union work and teacher education, through the lens of feminist praxis. She brings bio-graphical experience to teacher education, connecting historical activism with students' contemporary concerns in their placements and prospec-tive work, relating external teacher education requirements with neolib-eral re-alignments within the university. In Chap. 14, Jo Williams tackles the neoliberalisation of "community engagement", based on Freire's the-ory of emancipatory practice. Her chapter analyses the collective work she engaged in with colleagues in school communities and academia, bringing grassroots perspectives and a social justice orientation to col-laboration. Jo proposes the components of struggle as including "collec-tive dreaming", community knowledges, memories and vision, processes of conscientisation and building solidarities.

As universities become more closed to non-economic purposes, the chapters of this volume show how academics remain committed to colle-gial practices and visible and 'invisible' activisms that can be emancipatory and subversive. In the final chapter (Bottrell and Manathunga, Chap. 15) we reflect on the themes of managerial oppression and resistances and consider their interrelationship with processes of silencing and privilege. In this conclusion we highlight the "cracked continuities" of cultural democratisation through individual, collegial and collective resistances.

Notes

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8. Slaughter and Leslie, *Academic Capitalism.*

9. Cris Shore, "Audit Culture and Illiberal Governance. Universities and the Politics of Accountability," *Anthropological Theory* 8 (2008) 278.

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Part I

Seeing Outside-In

2

Twenty-First Century Feudalism in Australian Universities

Roberto Bergami

Introduction

This chapter is a critical reflection on some of the recent changes in the neoliberal university in Australia. I do so from a perspective of 'lived experience', drawing on what I have observed and come to know through speaking with many colleagues at various universities across the nation. However, at the outset I need to make it clear that this chapter has some drawbacks. The main issue is that I am unable to divulge much information about personal experiences, because that information belongs to my former employer, an Australian university and legally, it is their property. This caveat perhaps gives some insight into how information, decision-making and resistance to debate ensues in today's universities, although it is by no means limited to the university sector. As such, I am unable to cite and reference exact occurrences, but rather need to cast my argument in more general terms, where there is no information available in the

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public domain. In this respect I face challenges similar to those of Meyers,[1] who portrayed a sector in decline, facing many problems, but without reference to specific events.

As the challenges within higher education institutions are many, I focus on selected aspects of the main issues impacting universities in contemporary times, namely that:

- little has changed since feudal times in terms of governance and decision making structures and behaviour;
- the managerialisation of many processes and autocratic management practices (often including the use of covertly veiled threats and various forms of intimidation designed to 'divide and conquer') has led to academic apartheid between academics and administration professionals[2] and also between management and staff, greatly contributing to a toxic industrial relations environment;
- there has been a decided effort to silence academics through a loss of freedom and reduction/elimination of collegial debate and discussion (Weller and Van Gramberg 2006); and
- there is an unhealthy focus on accountability and performativity,[3] at times under the aegis of 'quality improvement', where a 'tick the box' mentality prevails, because this provides 'compliance evidence'.

Education has always been an integral and important part of the evolution of humans. Indeed, we may argue that without education there is no progress and betterment of life at a general level. Whilst in early human civilisation learning was mainly informal and structured learning limited largely to the privileged few, over time there was a gradual shift to make education more available to greater proportions of people, however, this is a relatively recent development. As education became more available and people more literate, demand for higher levels of study programs developed and with it universities, typically regarded as "seats of higher learning, critical enquiry and innovation",[4] having "the task of critically transmitting knowledge, bringing together teaching and research in an inseparable union".[5] The role and place of universities in recent centuries has strengthened in presence, with almost all nations having a university

sector. Furthermore, there is universal acceptance that university studies generally lead to better longer-term income prospects. According to a recent Canadian study,[6]

> the skills that individuals develop play a pivotal role in determining their labour-market opportunities and life chances in general, and are of vital importance to a country's economic performance and many social outcomes.

However, the same sector that has and continues to contribute so much to advancing the quality of life has been under increasing threat in some advanced economies, especially in Australia.

Often referred to as the 'lucky country', with a population of almost 25 million people,[7] Australia has enjoyed a comparatively high level of education, having a large number of higher education institutions, with a total of 43 accredited universities comprising 40 Australian universities, two international universities, and a smaller private speciality university.[8] These universities have not only been educating the domestic student population but have also been actively engaged in international education. Australian universities compete in international markets, not only against other domestic universities, but also with universities from other Anglophone nations, notably from the USA, UK and to a lesser, but increasing extent, those from New Zealand and Canada. According to Universities Australia,[9]

> Australia's excellent reputation for high-quality university education, our proximity to Asia and a lower Australian dollar helped to propel education export earnings to a record $21.8 billion in 2016 … The education of international students is Australia's third largest export, behind only iron ore and coal.

Considering the high monetary gains from university educational activities, one may be led to believe this sector's environment to be highly positive, however, a number of ominous clouds have emerged that may compromise its long-term sustainability.

Aspects of Feudal University Management Structures in Neoliberal Markets

University management in Australia has been under the spotlight in recent years for a number of reasons, including their attitudes and behaviour towards staff leading to numerous disputes over Enterprise Bargaining Agreements and their interpretations, as well as high executive salary structures. Indeed, I argue that, in reality, contemporary management behaviour has changed little since the days of feudalism, except that, perhaps, we are now more sophisticated and have given more convoluted titles to those who manage modern day organisations. Figure 2.1 shows a typical feudal structure.

Figure 2.1 shows a striking similarity to the modern-day pyramid-system organisation, as shown in Fig. 2.2. There is very little difference in the *modus operandi* of either structure. We have substituted Kings and Queens for Directors and CEOs, the Nobility represented by Senior Management, the Knights replaced by Non-Senior Management and Peasants and Serfs with Employees (workers).
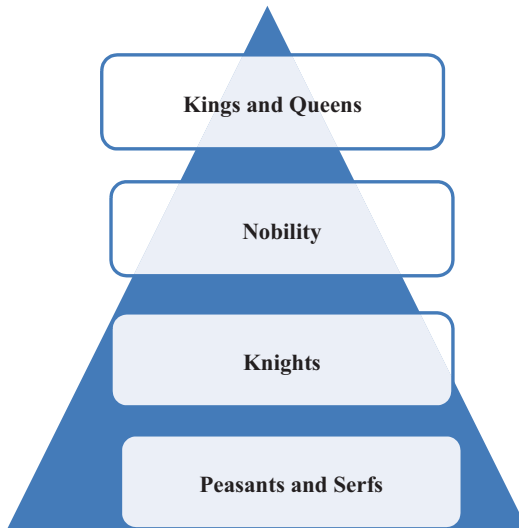

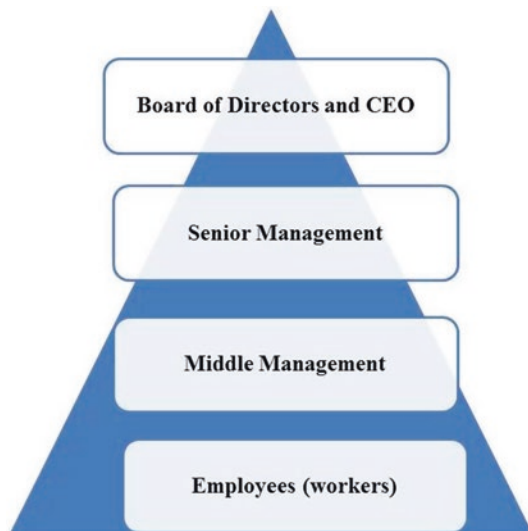**Fig. 2.1**   A typical feudal structure

Fig. 2.2 A typical modern day private enterprise structure

As universities have sought to align themselves to a more private enterprise structure, not surprisingly they have developed a hierarchy mimicking that of the corporate world, as shown in Fig. 2.3. It is the similarities between the three figures that, at the turn of this century, led me to begin using the phrase "twenty-first century feudalism".

As can be observed from Fig. 2.3, there is a top-down approach which has similarities to the feudal system. Policies and procedures, dictated from the top, are akin to royal decrees. Decision making is a somewhat nebulous process, as university management practices become more 'private' and secretive and less collegial and democratic – another aspect of the feudal approach to 'people control', now referred to as management.

The structure shown at Fig. 2.3 is very much in line with neoliberal ideology and management behaviour has increasing aligned itself to such ideology. This is where some of the problematic issues begin to arise, some of which I discuss here.

One of the important presumptions of neoliberalism is a free (self-regulating) market[10] and "the dominant ideology invading the university has been free market economic liberalism".[11] However, Australian
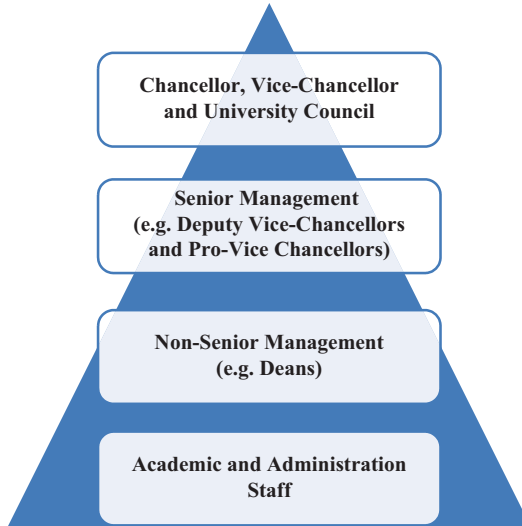
Fig. 2.3   A typical Australian university structure

universities do not operate in a free market environment, as a "university is a more uncertain and ambiguous entity than a private sector company".[12] So what drives universities to behave as though they were in a different 'market' and what are the implications?

Government policy and funding have enormous influence on universities and their operations. The current Turnbull Liberal-National Party coalition (right-wing) government's position is broadly that universities should be treated like private businesses and they should be run as such. Research is to be measured based on its output relevance. Funding should be tied to efficiency improvements, quantified as a percentage. Yet, it is argued that the "compulsory bureaucratic scrutiny and in some cases enhance risk-aversion, militate against genuine enterpreneurialism".[13] Consequently, our institutions of higher learning have gradually transformed from providers of educational services for "the public good and the community … [to being] conceived as corporations providing a private good for individual consumers"[14] and "forced to conduct themselves more and more like profit-seeking firms".[15] In the Australian context, Kenny[16] argues that "often the cry for efficiency and accountability has

been used as a mechanism for cost control, cost reduction and to drive particular policy agendas".

The neoliberal approach to running universities is not limited to Australia. According to Findlay,[17]

> Here and now, the independence of post-secondary institutions is reduced by external interests while being increased internally as a form of executive privilege to be wielded as a weapon against the academic freedom of academic staff … the 'managed university' uses autonomy as an alibi for transforming itself from independence and collegial self-governance into bad compliance and uncollegial intimidation, both of which are designed to contain and commercialize the academic activities of academic staff … with a view to requiring academic staff to adhere to and promote a neoliberal agenda posing as the public interest.

University governance in Australia began to be shaped in the late 1980s, and universities began to operate around a corporatist model that "aimed at delivering greater accountability to government … From the 1990s, university councils have become smaller … and, in particular, [have been] decreasing staff and student participation".[18]

Councils are akin to the mythical feudal elite knights of the round table, whose role was to advise the royalty (executive and senior management) on the treatment of peasants and serfs (staff). Councils have significant influence on the strategic direction of the university, controlling its operations, and workforce considerations and remuneration. The changing composition of councils has been mirrored at lower levels of the pyramid, where staff representatives have been progressively removed from internal governance committees on the managerial assumption that "they have a conflict of interest that should exclude them from many discussions and decisions",[19] and replaced instead by management representatives. This has resulted in there being minimal, if any academic staff voice in program design and research direction. Yet, these functions are core to academic work. The removal of academic voices has had at least two effects.

The first effect is the silencing of any dissenting opinion. As academic staff are no longer part of the discussion and decision-making committee

process, their critique cannot be received. Dissent is not welcome and "academics who speak out may be cut down to size".[20] For example, when academics create alternative critical fora such as email discussion groups and their reported critique is deemed unhelpful by management the 'punishments' may include losing "the use of email after criticising the institution".[21] This is not a conducive environment, but one where the wishes of management are largely rubber stamped into practice, via the 'legitimisation' processes of committees. The managerialist argument goes something along the lines of: 'we put the proposal through the committees, where it was debated, and they gave it their approval' and 'we consulted widely with the university community'– clearly not the case. It is not difficult to see that management-biased committees will always comply with management wishes. The top-down process marginalises academic expertise and valuable insights they could offer in proposing and designing new programs and being part of the approval debate and process. However, to do so means opening the door to criticism and as, we know that democratic processes take longer to complete. This, coupled with ridiculously short perennial looming deadlines for process completion, often management imposed, rather than externally driven, it must surely be more expedient not to use a democratic process. It seems management believes it is much more efficient to simply dictate the terms, so deadlines may be met and, in my scepticism, I would add perhaps KPIs and bonus payment may ensue. Certainly, a managerialist approach undermines academic democracy as we see the powers of managers rising with a commensurate decline in departmental (collective) decision making.[22]

In terms of research, management at some universities have developed the view that staff can be deemed research active, but 'mandated' to research into particular areas, while "removing the right and duty of research from many academic staff".[23] Yet, "ensuring that learning is actively connected to research within institutions is integral to maintaining the quality and meaning of higher education".[24] This does not mean all academics must research, but for the research active, the loss of research freedom is problematic, as among other things, passion for research is one of the components of success and can hardly be 'mandated'. There has been a "reduction in academics' autonomy and freedom of speech",[25]

as management see "academic freedom as preciousness, a union device to shield the work-shy".[26] In my own time as an academic, I continued to research and publish in areas outside my immediate business discipline specialisation, because I had an interest in the research topic, and believed the findings beneficial to the wider community, without being concerned as to whether my output would be recognised and counted towards my workload. This was simply my way of resisting subjugation.

The second effect of removing academic voices is that this environment produces even less communication between management and staff. According to Gardner,[27] Australian academics are "among the least satisfied internationally with management issues, including their level of influence and engagement in their universities". Staff feel distanced from decision-making, because they are. Instead of being part of the process, they are merely the executors of decisions they had little, if any, contribution in, making it much more difficult for them to feel engaged and reinforcing adversarial relations. In the dogmatic pursuit of cost-cutting, "university central managers are now in open conflict with higher education unions, and are felt by many staff to be a remote and sometimes hostile force",[28] resulting in "a general disquiet among a significant number of academic staff with regards to institutional leadership and management of their institutions".[29] As one academic put it to me so well in a conversation 'the cache of goodwill that academics had towards management has all been used up, there is nothing left to give'. One possible explanation for the workplace conflict may be due to the increasing numbers of managers who are appointed from private enterprise, lacking a deep understanding of how universities work, but bringing private sector corporate philosophies to the workplace. Consequently, there is a 'clash of cultures', as these managers' approach to industrial relations and staff management has a very different background and expectations. Managers are professionalised in their roles,[30] vigorously pursuing the targets they consider important, even though these may be detrimental to long-term sustainability.

The concentration in power to senior management cascades to lower levels, where deans are "gradually being absorbed into the executive power structure and complying with their redefined roles as managerial agents of the university's senior executive".[31] Autocratic-style/authoritarian university management seems to be increasingly the norm. However,

this approach seems paradoxical to the notion of a quality environment where "employee empowerment and an open culture can produce competitive advantage".[32]

The Quality Mantra: Selected Aspects

Government controls and university accountability was additionally exercised by the introduction of quality systems in Australian universities. These began with the establishment of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) in March 2000. AUQA continued its operation until January 2012 when it was replaced by the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA). The focus on quality was driven by audits and compliance requirements. Not surprisingly, this created much bureaucracy within universities. Some universities enlisted external consultants to complete these tasks, but a criticism of this approach is the external parties are not as familiar as the internal workings of the organisation as those who work there and, of course, hiring external consultants adds to budgetary pressures (addressed later in the chapter). Data gathering, reports and new processes were introduced to ensure the audit was successfully 'passed'. New processes were accompanied by new forms and documents, adding to the workload of staff and, in particular, increasing the administrative burden of academics that is "peripheral to core academic duties around teaching and research".[33]

As a result of compliance measures more complex study guides were developed, expanding to tens of pages by the inclusion of, among other things, graduate attributes and their links to assessments. Too much information and students may feel overwhelmed. The complexity of these guides led me to ask: Who is being audited - the university or the students? The semester updating of study guides increases academics' administrative workloads and is not a high value-adding process. My experience in the European Union (Germany and the Czech Republic) is with one-page study guides having the essential information for students. There is little point in producing a 20–30 pages document that remains unread. Are we really helping students under these circumstances, or are we just making a university bureaucrat happy, because they believe they can

demonstrate to a prospective auditor that such a complex document must surely meet all compliance criteria?

Under the aegis of quality, student feedback was introduced. This has been used at universities as a form of 'teaching quality' assessment. It is generally acknowledged that completion rates remain low, suggesting that students do not place a high value on them. It is commonly accepted among academics that this is another example of a form filling for auditable data, although the credibility of that data is questionable and using it as a performance tool is problematic. For example, evaluations of academics' knowledge of university services and whether the semester workload was acceptable are problematic questions. While knowledge of services such as student academic support is relevant for student referral, other services are largely peripheral to teaching. I interpret the workload question as rhetorical. Given the opportunity to lament about their university work, on balance, students are more than likely to seek less work – especially as they are less engaged, given other demands on their time such as casual employment. Students should be provided opportunity to participate in evaluating their education but this reductionist mode and its use in appraising academics must be questioned.

Enhancing the student learning experience is another consideration that has fallen under the umbrella of quality. Over the past two decades universities have shortened the length of the semester and reduced the number of teaching hours. In my case I used to teach 60 hours per subject per semester (4 hours class contact over a 15 week long semester). This was reduced to a 12 week long semester, with only 3 hours class contact, making the total 36 hours, or a 40% reduction in classroom teaching. I am perplexed with the claim that the student learning experience has improved with learning reduced time and teaching. I am not alone in this, as Bexley, et al.[34] found in their investigation, nearly half of academics believe there has been a drop in academic standards.

It should be noted that the time 'freed up' by that reduction in classroom teaching hours has been more than filled with the increases in administrative work, research efforts and ongoing maintenance and updating of the e-learning platform. Material must be uploaded and managed under a standard template with everything "on brand" – another example of loss of freedom behind a corporate mantra. Not all universities

use the same e-learning platform, and whilst some have been clever enough to adopt free applications, such a Moodle (also very popular in Europe), others have opted for proprietary and costly solutions, whilst bemoaning cost blowouts all along – a logic that is difficult to reconcile, except in terms of the culture of brand image.

The Peasants and Serfs: Aspects of Academic Working Conditions

Academic working conditions have been under serious consistent attack for over two decades in Australia. Tenured positions were removed under the Howard Government (1996–2007), but in terms of "the basic logic of policy, there is now no difference between Labor and the Liberal/National parties. The unchallenged assumption of national and state policy is that whatever problem exists, market logic can fix it".[35] With this ideology prevailing, there is a growing insecurity in the workforce. As universities pursue their quasi-private approach to running a business, they inevitably look to cut costs and view academic and administrative salary expenditure as one of the items to prune. Despite management rhetoric that 'people are out most important asset', the treatment of those 'assets' belies the statement. Management views salaries as an expenditure item, not as an investment in a workforce that can yield positive results. Part of the reason why this may be so is found in the long term data comparing government funding and student enrolments. Higher education student enrolments in Australia in 1987 were 393,734, of which 85% was funded by the government. By 2003, student numbers had increased to 828,871, but government funding reduced to 41%. By 2018, new funding formulae will be tied to CPI increases, meaning there will be no real increase in funding per student in the future. In terms of reliance on government funding, there are indeed challenges for universities. Consequently, one of the outcomes is cutting costs, and salary reduction is seen as an immediate solution by management, the result being a shrinking continuing academic workforce, replaced by a more 'financially convenient' sessional workforce. Coupled with an ageing workforce, an

issue needing attention, there are challenges, but the solutions need careful consideration for long term sustainability.

A number of different terminologies have been developed to recast the university workforce composition, such as workforce refreshment and workforce renewal. When these terms are deconstructed their meaning is basically that of casualization of the workforce and reduction in salary expenditure. There is a growing casualization of the workforce,[36] affecting administrative and academic staff. I have witnessed hundreds of staff exit universities over the course of my academic working life and have always been concerned about this loss of historical and applied institutional knowledge. The continual 'internal reforms' of the workforce are disruptive and it is questionable whether these really achieve positive long-term results. When, as has occurred at some universities, the pace of reform is such that on average every two years there is some workforce 'realignment' of administration staff and academics, the inefficiency impact is palpable. Many times, I was faced with the claim that administrative process had changed as a result of policy, but when I asked for the policy number to be cited so I could inform myself, this could not be substantiated. The by-product of this environment is friction between staff, possibly deliberate (divide and conquer) or simply not on the radar of management. An organisation's success depends on a smooth running, efficient and effective administration. My own experience has shown me that relationships between academic and administrative staff are important.

The employment of sessional staff has challenges associated with it. Typically, sessional staff are employed for teaching and not administration duties, consequently workforce casualisation has "been found to increase the workload of the continuing staff who manage casually employed academics".[37] This is because the bulk of the administration work falls on the full-time academics to complete. As examples, compiling reports for examination board meetings and attendance at those meetings is typically done by full time academic staff, as in the majority of cases sessional staff are not able to attend. Student consultation invariably falls on the full-time academics, as the majority of sessionals, according to my information, do not tend to be paid for student consultation.

Arguably, teaching is one of the most rewarding activities for academics, but the growing number of sessionals means a redistribution of work, and "as a result, there has been an intensification of academic work, increased stress for academics and an emphasis on accountability and performativity in universities".[38] Full time academics are picking up more administration work, leaving them with less time for class preparation, marking assessments, and student consultation. This additional work become 'invisible', as there is no additional remuneration or time compensation given and this does not seem to reflect a quality environment, particularly considering "around half of the undergraduate teaching in Australia is now done by casual labour".[39] Kniest[40] reports that between 2005 and 2015, the growth of mainly female casual and fixed term workforce was more than triple the rate of the continuing (tenured) FTE [full time equivalent] workforce.

We cannot use the neo-liberal free market analogy in employment conditions. Universities do have yearly staff plans and these are routinely used, but very few universities truly have a proper reward system that recognises the hard work of employees. Most have a yearly plan that may be translated into a nice report, but that is about all. There is little opportunity for staff to be rewarded for achieving 'stretch objectives'. Taylor[41] argues "quality is forgotten as participants busy themselves with maximising their performance on the indicators". In the vast majority of universities, yearly plans may also be used as a punitive measure: if you do not achieve, you may be placed on a performance plan, but if you exceed your plan, there is nothing other than perhaps a thank you by your manager. In other words, there is no incentive, therefore, no mutuality of gain. In rare cases where bonus payments are used, such as at the University of Canberra (UC), there is no guarantee these will actually eventuate. The UC announced they "had achieved a $4.1 million surplus in the 2016 financial year, but that this was not enough to trigger the bonus payment".[42] This circumstance highlights the difficulty with bonus incentives in universities, as they are discretionary. To be fair, the question to ask in these circumstances is whether management bonus payments were also suppressed, or whether there are two rules operating – one for the elite (the feudal royalty, nobles and knights) and the other for the employees (the feudal peasants and serfs)?

Rewards of the Nobility: Vice-Chancellor Salaries

Certainly, government funding has been experiencing a consistently downward flow for some time. What is curious to note though is that in the discussion about universities' financial woes, the focus has clearly been on academic and administration staff salaries, but little if any attention has been given to the salary and benefits structures enjoyed by the Vice-Chancellors (VCs). The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) conducted a comparative investigation of VC salaries in Australia, the USA, UK, Canada and New Zealand in 2015. They found Australian Vice Chancellors to be the highest paid among these nations. The "total remuneration received by Australia's VC in 2015 varied from $525,000 at Murdoch University to almost $1.4 million at the University of Sydney".[43] The highest increase since 2010 was at the Australian Catholic University where the VC received an 80% salary increase.[44] However, this was not an anomaly as, according to Hare,[45] in 2016 "the nations' 38 public university VC were paid an average of $890,000, with 11 earning more than $1 million" and in one case there was a 56% rise in five years. These figures are incredulous, especially when one considers the Australian Prime Minister's salary is just below $530,000. This begs the question: is running a university more complex than running the nation? How can these salary packages be excused, especially in the light of the large numbers of workforce reductions during the past decade, and the fact this is largely public money?

In defence of VC salaries, comparisons have been made with the role of a CEO in the top 200 firms in Australia.[46] Perhaps the fact they call themselves Presidents must surely enable them to be elevated to elite status. Not only do they earn more than the Prime Minister, but they also enjoy a title no politician in Australia has the luxury to use. The presidential title elicits comparison with that of the feudal king, who had unfettered power over his kingdom. Meanwhile, as many universities in Australia claim to be under financial pressure, it appears that the high salary structures are compensated by staff cuts, perhaps a case of "Nero fiddled while Rome burned".[47] In an unprecedented turn of events in

Australian academic history, Murdoch University successfully argued with the Fair Work Commission to set aside the expired Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, because of financial difficulties. There is little evidence to substantiate that financial woes are only due to the size of the academic workforce. This is ultimately likely to lead to a reduction in academic working conditions, but the same approach does not apply to senior management.

Conclusion

The neoliberal approach to universities in Australia is twenty-first century feudalism, with top-down decision making in an environment of authoritarianism, that is paradoxical to democracy. This has resulted in the marginalisation of academics and workplace conditions that regard them as easily disposable economic units. There are threats to job security with commensurate increased workloads and diminishing working conditions. Many academics are feeling oppressed under these conditions, that seem remarkably like those of the feudal system. Quality is being tinkered with, but the main purpose appears to be gathering metrics, that have dubious benefits and no relevance to the core functions of academic life: teaching and research.

I have been critical of universities and the neoliberal approach to their management, because it is my firm belief that in the long run this will not be sustainable. I acknowledge that I am from an opposing ideology, one that is more aligned with the sentiments expressed by the EU Committee on Culture, Science and Education on academic freedom and university autonomy that states in part "the academic mission to meet the requirements and needs of the modern world and contemporary societies can be best carried out when universities are morally and intellectually independent of all political or religious authority and economic power".[48] Sadly, this is not the case in Australia.

On a personal note, I tried to resolve my position as a dedicated academic trying to juggle teaching and research, as well as an increasing administration burden by developing relations with others in the workplace. I was always happy to assist others where I could, but I also knew

that if I needed help it was usually forthcoming. I resisted being compartmentalised into doing specific research and that created its own difficulties. I suppose I was 'lucky' in that sense because my workload was always above the required 100 percent, so there was little ground for mounting a productivity challenge – I was, after all, donating free time to the university by being above my 100 percent workload, however this is not sustainable en masse.

I have concerns for the future of Australian universities, because of the behaviour of governments and senior management and I am not alone in this, as "few academic staff believe the higher education sector is heading in the right direction or that there is strong government support for the university sector".[49] Government sees universities (and academics) as an expense item, not a way to the future. University senior management see academics as a different expense item and to some degree, easily disposable employees. Perhaps this is not surprising as, under the neoliberal ideology, academics are reduced to mere economic value, therefore, become part of institutional serfdom.

I do not have the answers to the problems I highlighted in this chapter, and these are by no means an exhaustive list. The only 'resistance' that I can see is perseverance, that must surely come from the dedication one has to the teaching profession, and the pleasure academics experience when they see their students learning. Academic passion and pastoral care may become unwitting contributors to the feudal system. There is a reluctance to 'let down' students, and because management knows this, they will exploit the goodwill of academics – this is evidenced by the invisible work. Universities should be all about teaching and learning and research in a safe and secure environment, but alas, under neoliberal rule, I fear they are heading in the opposite direction. For the reasons highlighted in this chapter, I hold the view that neoliberalism in education cannot and does not work.

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3

Double Negative: When the Neoliberal Meets the Toxic

Martin Andrew

Setting the Scene

This chapter nearly did not get written. I had already escaped through a gap in the unthinking and unthinkable form of neoliberalism that had racked and cracked my previous institutions and was thriving again. My need to tread over old wounds was vanishing. Yet stories of recovery from wounds have the ability to salve others, for whom I might, like Hamlet, hold a mirror up to nature. The wounds I describe here were caused by a gaping fissure in the body of 'the university', both the specific but nameless places I write of, and the broader institution.

In my career-time, the *university,* the humanist concept of *the whole community,* promised to my postgraduate self, had whittled down to the 'un-versity', with the neoliberal 'I' holding it tenuously together. Ward told a version of this same story, 'from *e pluribus unum* to *caveat emptor',* so I do not need to.[1] The macro-story of that broader concept permeates

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every micro-chapter in these volumes. It impinges, too, on the narrative I present here, but I won't retread heavily, having other tracts to tread. Allow my narrative, evocative autoethnographic, to signal my groundings and theoretical orientations allusively, implicitly. The macro-story is that of how totalitarian, authoritarian neoliberalism came to occupy the university as Nazism occupied much of Europe, forcing resistance underground. This will be the story of evocative autoethnography as resistance and the formation of one particular war wound and scar and how it continues to heal.

Over ten years, my experiences of occupied universities became inseparable from my perceptions of how 'the university' had morphed at local, national, international levels. No-one knew for what or whom the schizophrenic university existed. Mr. Hyde had permanently taken up residence in Dr. Jekyll.[2] My experiences and visions were triangulated on a daily basis by critiques, often Freirean and/or Foucauldian in orientation, by Henry Giroux, Cris Shore, Steven Ball, Bronwyn Davies, Andrew Sparkes; inter-collegial interactions at conferences, whispered corridor conversations beyond the panopticon and stories in international tertiary education publications and the press about university wastage on corporate and administrative jobs, the loss of academic freedom, mental illness in academe. Public intellectuals, as Giroux prophesied, are too threatening to be allowed to speak.[3] Neoliberalised universities are shooting themselves in the foot over and over. Hil calls it *Whackademia*.[4]

These sources were recorded in my systematic journallings and constitute a narrative record of my ontological journey. This data testifies that despite the heavy burden of responsibilisation to make us think this year's crisis and restructure was all our fault, the madness was not our own; it was an epidemic from outside. It also wore down (but not out) those with whom I discussed these burdens, this madness, whose approved (ethics tick) presence permeates my story. Underground, we shared a collegiality of empathy, enacting Barcan's *politics of hope*[5] by maintaining Davies and Bansel's "will to critique".[6] As Barcan knows, my story is not unique: my embodied, evocative autoethnography will resonate and the retelling will aid further recovery, my own and yours, simultaneously valourising the collegiality of empathy the institution would eliminate. Such critical

writing through the silence allows us to 'see through the cracks', creating new ontologies.

The Banns

Here I raise the Banns, introductory dramatic proclamations or announcements of the forthcoming, as in a medieval morality play.[7] My protagonist's experience was localized, institutional and quite specific. His story instantiates the observation that neoliberalism is refracted through local socio-political contexts rather than experienced homogeneously. While the neoliberal ideology constituted the epidemic, the disease had institutional, specific sources. The toxicity belonged to the local culture, the faculty as a limb of the wider university, itself a plaything in the fingers of the neoliberalism embodied in national policy. He is a thing inside a thing inside a thing; the smallest babushka, the heart of the peeled onion. This micro-story is located at the place where quotidian neoliberal contagion intersects toxic institutional culture.

At work in the petri dish are the various micro-organisms, bacteria and mitochondria that populated this culture, anonymous players on his page. Some are fellows of the collegiality of empathy, and other presences are ciphers, figures in a morality play about my protagonist, *Humanum Genus* called *The Castle of Perseverance*, a fifteenth century work which features devils with firecrackers in their arses as an image of evil overreaching. Featuring 15 good and 15 bad characters, it provides a frame for naming un-nameable neoliberalised subjects (another ethics tick) and using morality nomenclature *(Humanum Genum, Devil, Envy)* to stand for concepts rather than individuals. These people have embraced the neoliberal self, accepting the Faustian kiss Ball described.[8] Giroux saw neoliberalised subjects as "competitive self-interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain".[9] As it's a morality play, any resemblance to people alive or dead is coincidental, but as it's evocative autoethnography, it is when my characters and story resonate that their contribution to the debate, and to knowledge, becomes relevant.

This narrative is unabashed in its use of allegory, metaphor, ambiguity, wordplay and visceral imagery, running counter to neoliberalism, a

language, Davies reported, without human provenance or possibility.[10] Readings, in his account of the 'ruined' university, had famously warned the university would become "an autonomous collective subject who is authorised to say "we" and to terrorise those who do not, or cannot, speak in that 'we'".[11] Civic discourse long since yielded to the language of commercialisation, privatisation, deregulation that obscure egregious agendas.[12] Lorenz observed New Public Management "parasitizes the everyday meanings of (its) concepts—*efficiency, accountability, transparency,* and (preferably *excellent)* quality—and simultaneously perverts all their original meanings".[13]

Neoliberalism is repulsed by such rhetorical weapons as satire, metaphor, allegory and autoethnography because they are they are counter-discursive instruments of resistance, rebellion and repositioning. Believing that stories such as mine may be collective stories of the empathy of collegiality, I enter a process of lifting the "veil of silence around emotions and bodies" to see what is written, scarred and characterised there.[14] Writing on the symptoms of neoliberalism is rich in metaphor, applied to changing academic spaces (ruins, iron cages, asylums, fortresses, fast food outlets, sausage machines, factories, swamps, *whakademia),* victimized or resistant academic bodies (numbed, nervous wrecks, inmates, players in a game, imposters, survivalists, precariats) and conformist neoliberal subjects (hyper-competitive ninjas, bots 'inserted' with discourse, non-critical zombies, artificial persons, pod people). I write with the ardour of Withers and Wardrop who note of the 'devastated' university, "scoundrels have infiltrated the academy—bureaucrats, managers and marketing 'experts'—some of whom know very little, or even care about, education".[15]

I make no apology for my expressive, transgressive, poetic language, since this is the story of a scholar who 30 years ago wrote a doctoral thesis on the architectural symbolism of the closed and gaping body in Renaissance writings, and whose career has traversed the discourse-rich domains of literary studies, drama, cinema history, sociolinguistics, Foucauldian critical discourse analysis, creative writing, and multinational language teacher education inflected by Freire. My experience is constituted by and constitutive of language. This essay is an exercise in creative non-conformity. Those corporations want to turn us into their playthings. This creature, like others in this volume, bites back.

This is the story of the salving of a wound and forming of a scar, but it is also the exploration of a creative quest for integrity both in research writing and in academic living. It's about the lost art of authenticity Kreber describes.[16] This chapter situates a multidisciplinary, essentially autoethnographic, evocative, narrative study of the impact of organizational toxicity on tertiary academic-researcher-educators within Australasian universities that were playing catch up with the precepts of neoliberalism. I argue that when the symptoms of workplace toxicity collide and collude with those of managerialism, the results confuse and derail the supposedly instrumental work of neoliberal reform to economise and responsibilise the individual. Its agendas might appear to pivot on the neutral nominalisations Barker lists, *intensification, privatization, marketization* and *metricization.*[17] However, as Giroux also argued, these agendas embody less neutral aspects such as ego-driven competitiveness.[18] There is terrifying performativity.[19] There are perverse Orwellian technologies of evaluation and audit[20] and sinister Foucauldian espial-cum-discipline,[21] annually ensuring the monitored, evaluated and rewarded survival of the so-called fittest. In the toxic neoliberalised university, all of these technologies are gapingly open to corruption and distortion. Where the quantifying neoliberal intersects the contagion, lurks the culture I examine.

The methodology of autoethnographers is one of resistance, using memories to construct stories of resilience. It enables individual lived experience to be inscribed within a collective critical debate. Chang asserts it also takes self-narrative from storytelling into realms of data, transcending "mere narration of self to engage in cultural analysis and interpretation".[22] Sparkes writes, in its embodied form, it gives voice/body to cultural practices that "demean, diminish, silence, or deny the lived realities of certain people and the stories they tell".[23] It demands a self-reflexivity that allows spaces for representations of individuals to be validated as research. It is evocative, accessible, dramatic. It involves presenting and re-presenting the self in ways that produce data through interactions, observations, analyses and interpretations. Thus, we gain insights into the modes of thought, action and interaction that emerge from the process of enacting the self and others as data.

For Ellis and Bochner, this process produces "autobiographies that self-consciously explore the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language, history and ethnographic explanation".[24] This needs a tightrope balance of integrity, ethically calculated risk and care with "relational concerns".[25] This involves Tolich's broader ten-principle ethical insight around consent (colleagues have read my accounts), consultation (with chairs of ethics committees) and vulnerability (do no harm).[26] Fictionalisation and allegory are used in place of *noms-de-plume*. There is nothing in this account that couldn't, wouldn't and shouldn't be said to anyone's face. What I present here utilises purposeful and ethical fictionalisation[27] and needs to because memory makes *lacunae* and is unreliable, evoking "a feeling that what has been represented could be true" but could also be a fiction.[28]

If I am to conduct a post mortem, what are the symptoms of the toxic university? In Organizational Development, toxic workplaces are, Kusy and Holloway write, ecosystems demonstrating "patterns of counterproductive" behaviour debilitating to individuals, teams and eventually the organization itself.[29] They are complex systems, cultures at once self-replicating and repulsive, featuring such characteristics as low morale, poor work-life balance, increased physical and mental illness, unrealistic expectations, lack of loyalty, scapegoating and dysfunctional relationships.[30] They reflect the capitalism-driven decline of contemporary values and need to be balanced, Chapman and White maintain, by stories of how people cope, transcend or quit.[31]

The impacts of toxicity cut much deeper than the work of neoliberalism, and make sense only when examined retrospectively, reflectively, critically like a corpse upon a table. This essay analyses the dilapidated university as autopsy. I suggest maintaining integrity as a versatile academic in such an environment involves defending *The Castle of Perseverance*.[32] I allegorise this as an image of the besieged postmodern academic body/identity, but that the process reveals soul-saving possibilities for prospering as a creative, critical, independent educational agent. The neoliberalised university is Hamlet's "unweeded garden/That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature/Possess it merely" (1.2.134–136). Academe is as damned as a figure in a morality play.[33]

The Story

The story of *Humanum Genus* unfolds a decade ago. He's the newly employed Senior at an ambitious satellite campus. He rushes from the airport. He's literally five minutes into his job and he's defending doctoral students at their confirmation seminar from the charge that feminist standpoint theory has no place in exegetical writing about autoethnography. We are told *there's too much feminism in this seminar* – surely there are other more appropriate theories? The room was stilled, when the candidature presentation was ended, with a fist on a table and the candidate, a rare indigenous student among white, white faces, was silenced. She couldn't answer (She never completed). The session's mediator was dark-suited, unproven, managerial, bright-eyed-boy, alpha and demanding to be heard (Enter *"Devil and with him Pride, Anger, and Envy")*. A wall of tension gripped the cohort of doctoral students. *Humanum Genus* seemed to speak for a long time, and people were nodding, and the student was beaming. Someone was clapping. Was he, newer and more of an outsider, actually welcome?

It was downhill from here; *Humanum Genus* learned the Devil was newly the collective manager. He had been chosen above all others and had been praised, but after this he would never shake the hand of *Humanum Genus* again. And now, when he looked at him to say goodbye, *Devil* et al. gave him his back, a bullying behaviour repeated forever after, especially at faculty social events. *Humanum Genus* had been there an hour. He was a newcomer, a foreigner and crestfallen. Had he moved his whole life thousands of miles for this?

Over the next week, it got no better. When his house was broken into and neither the police nor the estate agency would act, he was unable to leave the unsecured property. This is when the Devil told him, "we have given you an office, so use it". He was productive (Four years passed: 500 Masters students taught, 7 units written, 13 journal articles and 7 PhD candidates to completion), but seldom could be in his office. The office was a glass wall with the panopticon turned on full. Later, when the Devil wanted to hurt him, he said he'd only been appointed because he was a man and because his colleagues, 'those women', were too 'catty'.

By the time this campus disbanded, there were 13 mediations about bullying still to be held and three had already seen staff successful. The university was bleeding money, and shortly closed, but *Humanum Genus* was on his way to his next job in service of a university whose catch-call was social justice. This aligned with his lingering idealism. A week before he started, *Deus,* who appointed him, made promises and laid out what his life would look like, left. A new broom, *Deus II,* was imported from overseas and the two of them became allies, outsiders in a foreign culture.

Humanum Genus was given what appeared a C.V.-perfect-fit job – international and diplomatic educational work – but one that came with poisoned chalices. These involved damaged partnerships, slander and libel, hate campaigns, malpractice, nepotism and no curriculum documentation because the disgruntled academic *(Ire)* being replaced had ritually burned them. When he asked *Ire* what he was to do, Ire said his predecessor, *Patience,* had committed suicide.

So: he inherited a public relations disaster within what should have been a prestige program if leadership had been allowed to flourish. But this was *The Castle of Perseverance* and within three years the program again had reputation, quality, satisfied graduates, happy partners, excellent external quality audit. He won awards which he shared with his team, who already had in train plans to betray him (Enter again, *Devil and with him Pride, Anger, and Envy*). This plot was despite his having exceeded every performance measure every year. At that ceremony, he received a kiss – from *Pride, a* super*deus* at the top of the university. At that moment, he became the deed's creature, Faustus shouldered by angels good and bad: a test for *The Castle of Perseverance.*

The awards offered 'the kiss of death', according to a once-powerful figure he now called *Confession and Penance*. *Confession and Penance*, in fact the fallen *Deus II* stripped bare, told the backstory of *Pride, Anger, and Envy*. *Confession and Penance* said that what became *Humanum Genus's* plum job was to have been given to *Envy*. *Envy* had been waiting its turn a long time, updating qualifications, beefing up contacts and scoring on the power and nepotism scale – rapaciously stealing what belonged to *Humanum Genus*. But *Envy* had had a falling out with *Confession and Penance* over rewards thought due but, in fact, undeserved. *Humanum Genus* would pay for *Envy's* bitterness forevermore. *Envy* says:

Al myn enmyté is not worth a fart;
I schyte and schake al in my schete.[34]

The rest is a story of the revenge that happened once *Deus II* was scape-goated following an ambushed cultural review – with *Humanum Genus* as additional collateral damage. To undermine *Deus II* and damage all those who had been supported was the objective. The castle was once more under siege. *Deus III,* an insider veteran of carnage-ridden restruc-turings, may not have known this because *Deus III only* took advice from *Pride, Anger* and *Envy,* never the knowing, silenced, underling footsoldiers.

Deus III was the most colonised neoliberal subject and the good angel, murdered. Genuine communication didn't need to happen and doesn't when things are a *fait accompli* because 'consultation' is just another motion to go through with visceral 'outcomes'. And this is how *Deus III* came to know nothing, and make decisions based on this nothing; and then there was nothing. The underground was flushed out with tear gas. Perverse vexatiousness reigned without check, colleague shitting on col-league. The careers of the meritorious were sabotaged by the meretri-cious, things 'rank and gross in nature'. From above came the instruction, bleed the body to death. The rank and the gross were the new normal, the culture. *Deus III* applied no tourniquet. The Castle's battlements fell. There were 50, then 120, then 50 more, redundancies. This institution died the death, but had actually been shooting itself in the foot for many years due to its toxic form of neoliberalism governance.

The death cannot be lamented because the culture was toxic. If life there were open-coded, the word 'toxic' would come out on top. With *Deus III*, as Australian as *XXXX,*[35] it was a world of haves and have-nots: *Devil* et al. and instantly disposable footsoldiers. Anyone who chose integrity over compliance was out. Most footsoldiers chose the ethical way and fell on their swords; some, those with financial liabilities, could not. *Devil* et al. left it until Christmas Eve to tell *Humanum Genus* that his re-application for his own job had been unsuccessful and given to *Envy*.

The kiss of death had been the doing of *Envy*. This had followed many a conspiratorial, lie-filled conversation behind the arras while

Humanum Genus was on overdue approved study leave, having had none for four years. These conversations, mediated by *Envy*, were about how *Humanum Genus* had not been able to deliver on-time statistics because he was, inexcusably as it turned out, on approved leave, and, moreover, out of cultural memory. This was despite *Humanum Genus* having left all statistics on Z-drive according to policy. *Industry* has no role in stories when they're out to get you. In the toxic version of the neoliberal university, being on leave, like being sick, means absenteeism and underperforming.

Because *Humanum Genus* loved writing, he'd earned being *half-time* research using the current spreadsheet. He thought he'd earned a reward; but so had other colleagues and this was expensive, transgressive. Yesterday's reward was today's punishment. Naturally, the *Devil and with him Pride, Anger and Envy* changed the formula – three times in three years so that no-one could keep up – and crunched the numbers differently. Burroughs had famously noted "The devil deals only in quantitative merchandise".[36] A colleague who took minutes at Research Committee leaked, "they talked about you – you have points – you've earned funds", but nothing came. The points had been 'revised' down. Suddenly completed and current doctoral students were worth nothing. Grant applicants from footsoldiers were blocked and only those close to *Pride, Anger* and *Envy* were progressed. All collaborative projects were rendered worthless; research outputs either annexed or rated minimally. Last year's 'A' heroes were this year's zeroes.

This was the meritocracy from hell. *Humanum Genus* was told the false news that his discipline hadn't had doctoral completions or research outputs. The true news was his completions and outputs had been annexed by a code that made *Pride, Anger and Envy* look better. What Dante showed Virgil in Hell was *Fraud* and *Treachery*, amongst others, and we stare them in the face in the toxified, neoliberalised university. The castle was in ruins. *Humanum Genus* was hospitalized three times with cancer. Summarily displaced, he was rendered temporary, despite having both points and tenure. He waited a year more because he could surely leave with blood money. Besides, a new line of vision was emerging.

He vowed *no more institutions* and stuck with it. An independent, one of the new order para-academics, now he has all the contracts he needs.

He's now able to write again, productive and creative and collegially. He's healthy. Ten years came back. His imagination has returned. He was headhunted for his experience; two fresh international partners came calling. From afar, he heard reports of the rats on the sinking ship. The wheels of justice are slow. Even *Pride, Anger, and Envy*, who had pushed out others to buoy themselves, were shipwrecked. *Humanum Genus* listened to many stories of and by colleagues, and was told tales that followed the trajectory of his own with the theme of *why did they have to do it like this?* They didn't; but the intersection of the toxic and the neoliberal made it so. The story of *Humanum Genus* is far from unique, but here it is, a corpse on the table like the dilapidated university. As God (c15th) says,

> *Thus endyth oure gamys.*
> *To save you fro synnynge*
> *Evyr at the begynnynge*
> *Thynke on youre last endynge!*[37]

Post Mortem

Think on your last ending as we partake in a retrospective critical examination of the moribund 'un-i-versity' and move towards fashioning a recreated academic identity, a topic at the heart of studies alluded to in this post mortem. Consider, too, my medium: retrospective, evocative auto-ethnography as a critical yet creative practice, a mode of resistance in arrears, a coming to understand the "gamys" that at the time made no sense. These games glorified an institution occupied by the *Devil, Pride, Anger, Envy*, inflected with the ethos of the marketised, managerialised corporation, marked by rankings, benchmarking and the appearance of productivity.[38] Focusing only on the visible, it merely emphasised the gulf between appearance and reality, recognising the performances only of those who played by the neoliberal rulebook,[39] rendering others hyperinvisible.[40] To be in the game of scoring points for institutions you no longer believe in is playing a game of madness, ceding to that Faustian bargain.

This could never have been written at the time, but this narrative has been restructured from shards and fragments I and others had left behind as text and inscriptions on memory. Writing, as an act of repositioning, recreates subjectivities and makes visible possibilities that could not have been entertained when neoliberalism and toxicity collided and colluded to create pandemonium. In such an endgame version of neoliberal culture, there was no potential for collaborative, generative work; there was barely time to make sense of what was happening. At the end, there were open cold war and exit wounds. This post mortem, an instrument of democratic criticality, allows me to open out, make visible, discover, understand, move on. Now there are scars, and scars are healed wounds.

Opening out its corporeality, we cut into the brain to find regimes of performativity and surveillance that kneecapped research and distorted measures of teaching quality.[41] In the toxic body, the figures were altered, convoluted, and earned merit annihilated, favouring fraud and nepotism. Scholarship was fractured into merit and non-merit shards,[42] and those measured as possessing merit were annexed by those in power. As we dig the scalpel further, we see managerial persuasion had ways of making footsoldiers comply and say under oath that everything, even redundancy, was voluntary.[43] With metrics contorted by mischief, even the most successfully evaluated are forced into believing they are worthless and as a prelude to making them feel disposable.

Slicing the eyeball, we found that technologies to reduce research activity were skewing not measuring performativity.[44] Research leadership was missing in action, driven intrinsically by the survival of the self, not the research community.[45] Annually, ever fewer were eligible even for audit; even then they were merely auditing how useful you appeared to the cause, not your qualities as an educator, researcher, leader, critical contributor to your academic and local communities. Systems of accountability were coercive, abusive, abused as technologies for governmentalising subjects.[46] The toxic university is a breeding ground not so much for neoliberalised academic ninjas as systemic *Iagos*.[47] They deny and demean others to boost their own appearance of 'honest' performativity. The all-seeing panopticon can itself only see what *seems,* not what *is.* Competence is reconstituted as incompetence; active engagement as laziness. In this toxic university, the odds are stacked, the level playing field

tilted. Bullying dominates, pushing merit aside.[48] Only when the actual agenda – externally imposed oblivion presented as a story of failed individuals – becomes apparent does it make any sense.

What do we see when we open the nervous system? That the mental and general well-being of academic staff has declined and, due to audits and more – there are "anger, disappointment, fear, helplessness, confusion, shame, insecurity, anxiety, determination, and hostility".[49] "We have become casualised, contingent, insecure, invisible".[50] Academics risk madness to succeed.[51] There is a lack of space to reflect.[52] Some become nervous wrecks, worn down by hyper-competitiveness and its adjunct administrivia,[53] while others play possum, default into zombification, passing as undead to survive, desensitised by audit, surveillance, workload, workforce and the acquiescence of academic leadership.[54] In addition to the living dead, some became real corpses.[55] There are suicides, heart attacks, workings to death. Fifty-one percent of UK academics who wanted to quit cited negative health impacts, a correlate of overwork, as the reason.[56] Acquiescence wins merit; resistance, querulous complaints, witch hunts. Voices are stopped, critical contributions censored or ignored, objections overruled. Family counsellors are appointed as change management consultants, but are extensions of the panopticon, reporting soundbites to *Deus. Deus* and super*deus* employ their friends and networks, and build gangs. The idea of the workplace as contractually holding 'duty of care' is missing in action; its moral compass pointing only to the eugenic survival of its own narcopathic kind. Mirrored in this story of *Humanum Genus* we see stories of the decay of health, mental breakdown, absenteeism, vexatiousness, perversity and bullying.

Lifting the heart, we see traditional relationships of trust and professionalism eroded,[57] anxiety rising, social relationships deteriorating.[58] *Envy* and *Greed* are given status; colleague fights colleague; lies and bullshit have free reign.[59] The link between core academic values and work appears severed.[60] The idea of full professor as community mentor is dead; administrative slaves, they must now look out only for themselves and theirs. Hierarchies of professorship are colonised by 'un-i-versity' executives bleeding the university of funds as functionaries.[61] In 'un-i-versity' bodies where toxicity is allowed to fester, truths once held by corporate memory become impactful slanders perpetuated by *the Devil,*

Pride, Anger and *Envy.* Key information is withheld, access to opportunity and privilege is inequitable. In our story, we saw committees meeting behind closed doors; researchers frozen out; no accountability being offered for decisions, and needful communication deliberately blocked.

Meanwhile, cutting a vein, the bloodstream hardens from an emphasis on neutral *exchange* to dangerous *competitiveness.*[62] Enacting *Lord of the Flies,* hypercompetitive "ninjas"[63] turn on colleagues in a sardonic parody of Darwinism, inflicting "hidden injury".[64] Strategies of not releasing key information about change and metrics are symptoms of the toxic 'un-i-versity'. Programs developed by one academic are snatched away and given to others in authoritarian acts of nepotism or annihilation. We witness the systemic failure of a management that narcissistically mislabels itself leadership. The culture of *fait accompli* results from one where communication and consultation are weaselled into box-ticking exercises. Fighting the good fight is exhausting. It's not a failure of Darwinism, but a triumph of integrity to exit, saved by *epimeleia heautou,* an ethical "care of the self".[65]

Colloquy

To exit the 'un-i-versity' is not a choice but an inevitability if not because the university is ruined or devastated then because living with integrity requires the ethical choice; because slow time allows the engagement in dialectical and creative thinking denied those on the treadmill.[66] How can you live with yourself within such a space; how can you live *fullstop?* The strategies of maintaining a collegiality of empathy, a community of dissensus and creating counter-discursive writing only go so far as they still require reliving and revisiting old wounds and being among those still determinedly living the nightmare. To work from within the devastated university bespeaks naivete, desperation or just economic need. Such action, or rather default inaction, won't enable a wound to scar and seal. Why would *Humanum Genus* look for work in another such institution? How strong is the hope that other places, while colonised by neoliberalism, might just be less toxic? How unlucky would it be to strike the double negative of neoliberalism plus toxicity again?

Yet thriving outside the academy is increasingly an option, particularly, for either those frustrated by the impossibility of tenure (typically people in their '30s) and those whose trajectories echo those of *Humanum Genus* in this story: pre-retirement mid-careerists (in their '40s and '50s), hitting not a glass ceiling but a poisoned swamp. This is the generation arguably most impacted by neoliberalism.[67] They are not subaltern rejects, *excreta;* they are self-fashioned, counter-culture, post-precariate multi-hyphenates; autonomous agents of 'university' in the truer sense mentioned at the start.

Theirs is a position of privilege for those of accrued experience and knowledge and realistically some post-familial and financial independence. It is a safe place for creative non-conformity; for performing autopsy; for the healing of scars. This 'paraversity' or 'alter-versity' of 'para-academics' offers the ability to do academic good work outside institutions as creator, expert, contractor or consultant, operating unseen in plain sight as ethical, creative non-conformists.[68] Such escapees from the anxiety-making 'un-i-versity' "carve out opportunities to inhabit spaces that appear off limits under the terms of the contemporary academy, which has been so thoroughly 'occupied' by marketization".[69]

This often part-honorary, all-honourable emeritus 'outside' zone is a constructive space for *Humanum Genus* and his generation, not quite Dantean Paradise but a long way from Hell. It is a reflective, safe, ethical, identity-affirmative space for articulating and reclaiming the value and integrity of the practical and collective work of knowledge and resistance. It is one of the few remaining spaces of genuine possibility and hope.

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4

When All Hope Is Gone: Truth, Lies and Make Believe

Mark Vicars

Introduction

This chapter draws on the notion of academic work as a situated social practice: one that is an ethically positioned endeavour, that is critically informed and articulates ideals and ideas that are transformative and for the social good. Drawing on an understanding of academic work that is underpinned by the principles of social justice is an enterprise that is connected to, informed and affected by a recognisable paradigmatic genealogy.[1] The Humboldtian conceptualisation of academic workers being autonomous agents over their teaching and research has, in recent years, undergone significant shifts heralded by the rise of organisational reforms and a regulated disciplinarity. The value placed upon higher education institutions, it could be argued, has turned away from a humanistic aim of "Bildung- the concept of bonding individuals, culture and society in a

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harmonious interrelationship [in which] Universities as such, are not merely responsible for training professionals, but also for cultivating the individual and developing character and moral fibre"[2] to a culture of metric driven accountability and performativity. Moral fibre, I suggest, has been replaced with an imperative for academic workers to keep their moral nerve amidst continual organisational restructures and reforms.

Narrated through ontologically and epistemologically nuanced interpretive frameworks, this chapter re/tells a reflexive and biographically positioned 'truth' that speaks about having an experience of working in an increasingly reformed and stormed higher education institution.[3] It could be any higher education institution and for those of us on the 'inside', the tropes that can be found in any of a number of our stories speak to the framing of both academic process and product that remakes intellectual work(ers) subject to ideological and performative functionality[4].

Minding the Gap

Disciplinary subjectification of academic work(ers) by neo-liberal narratives in higher education are increasingly re/storying and re/presenting what academic work is or should be. Speaking back to the everyday realities of tertiary education can be a fraught affair. The economic re-inscribing within narrowing margins of productivity and performative measures heralded by the Bologna Process have been and are being connected to both teaching and research evaluations. In the U.K., documentation on the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework on the Higher Education Funding Council of England website[5] stated that it "aims to recognize and reward excellence in teaching and learning and outcomes, and help inform prospective choice". The concept of choice situates the student as consumer, education as a product and frames up a neo-liberal model of competition amongst institutions and academic workers disclosing the rituals of power through which we re/encounter (our)selves and become reconstituted as workers in the academy.

Recognising the terrain in which academic work is now located and the direction in which it is travelling increasingly raises questions about academic agency, the role and function of higher education institutions in preparing graduates for the increased demands of a workplace as characterised by paradigmatic supercomplexity, that is,

> …. within a supercomplex, twenty first century knowledge society, where the future is not only unknown but unknowable, and where the frameworks by which we make sense of our world are moving, blurring and shifting as well as being highly contested and contestable.[6]

A homogeneity arises out of our experiential narratives of working in contemporary tertiary institutions. And yet, in contesting the 'how' and the 'what' of this unknowable, supercomplex future, some of us are left working the ruins.[7] MacLure[8] in her articulation of *ruins* in relation to what she calls "the crumbling edifice of Enlightenment values that regulated theory and research for two centuries" lists a lexicon of disappointment:

Ruin	Disappointment
Failure	Entanglement
Disconcertion	Getting stuck
Unintelligibility	Getting lost
Bafflement	Abjection
Stuttering	Rupture
Haunting	Trouble
Mourning	Discomfort (etc.)

She goes on to note how the loss of faith in "'victory narratives'" recognises that its truths are always partial and provisional, and that it can never fully know or rescue the other. To this, I would add, none more so when we become the Other in our own experiential and embodied narratives when faced with confronting a particular set of positioned beliefs and feelings about the higher education. Beliefs and values that connect to and have been informed out of particular educational experiences that have shaped how and why we invest in particular educational paradigm and discourses[9].

In Camera

In putting to work the tacit dialectic of intimacy/detachment, I draw on the epistemology of proximity to restory a narrative of psychological, social and emotional dis/ease. Proximity in the recognition of a story that I have heard repeated from colleagues across the globe and in an uneasy recognition that in parts bear resemblance to my own. Embarking on a PhD in Education in 2003, I learnt how universities can provide a critical space, in and amongst, the many competing discourses, practices, concepts and modalities of the self.[10] Writing this chapter in 2017, I am prompted to suggest how there is an undercutting of the premise of socially provocative academic labour, that it could be argued, reframes intellectual endeavour within an ever diminishing hall of mirrors. Sturken[11] suggests in her concept of "technologies of memory" that memories are produced through 'objects, images, and representations' and that these are "not vessels in which memory passively resides so much as objects through which memories are shared, produced, and given meaning". She notes how objects involved in the production of memory tend to attach themselves to places and sites and as the landscape of higher education continues to shift, and as we move towards even more uncertain times in the academy, the epistemic situatedness of 'I' that emerges from individual vales and cultural practices[12] are increasingly important places from which to remember. The perspective of reappraising the everyday in a way that problematises academic work to real-life conditions and neoliberal discourse in higher education "needs to be an iterative process rather than a linear one and needs to be backwards, forwards, inside-out and outside-in somewhat simultaneously, because it is complex, recursive and has multiple layers".[13] It is clearly traceable in how we understand our working lives in the academy is producing a language that is characterised by affect and perhaps speaking longingly and in halcyon terms will do little to transform the contemporary realities of academic life. The question of "What can we do?"[14] is an enduring one and Springer[15] responded in his article "Fuck Neoliberalism" that:

… though we can only respond in an academic format using complex… theories…to weaken its edifice this seemed disempowering…I often fell that this sort of framing works against the type of argument I actually want to make. It is precisely in the everyday, the ordinary, the unremarkable, and the mundane that I think a politics of refusal must be located.

It is therefore with this injunction in mind, I draw on the story of a colleague and put to work the function of *parrhesia*: a form of speech that draws out of pre-established everyday experience, theoretical and practical understanding to 'story' how contemporary academic work is reconstituting academic subjectivities. The following narrative, as told by a former colleague, has been reconstructed from a first person account and has been structured thematically in the re-telling.

Truth

Storytelling is "always a way of searching for one's, speaking one's relationship to the Law".[16]

I am perhaps overly romantic about the idea of universities and I imagine the university I wanted for my students to be like the experience it was for me. As someone who had not had a family history of tertiary education, university was an exciting place to think, to try out ideas and question a whole lot of things and critique what the world is or what it could be. I thought that was a really important part of what a university experience should be. Over a period of time it has become a very apparent that is not what is valued. When I started in academic work it was with no intention of ever being an academic. It was mainly to do my PhD and I sort of fell into academia rather than it being a determined career choice. When I first started working at a university it was exciting, challenging work and there was a strong sense of collegiality. There was a great deal of respect for the intellectual work that was being done. We read each other's work, we spoke across different discipline areas and exchanges were always respectful. There was time to do this work and there was this notion that our research was highly relevant to our teaching and that out teaching should be research led.

I had a strong sense that in my job there required a lot of questioning and critiquing to make change happen. What I came to know and experience is this is less and less the case. It became my job to keep the students happy at any cost even if it was to the ultimate detriment of the students themselves. By this I mean their learning. The students, I taught had a sense of entitlement of what it meant for you to be working with them, they didn't always see it as an intellectual exercise but rather that they, or their parents' taxes were paying for you to be at their disposal 24/7. There was always a barrage of emails – I felt overwhelmed and I began to realize that if I didn't respond to a student's email within 12 hours – no matter what time it was sent, I would get a follow up email that was bordering on abusive, demanding my attention. In response, I often started by explaining: "look…you might see me in a classroom but but this is only one aspect of my work and there are other commitments I have to fulfil and like everyone else I have to balance priorities on my time:" But that only works with a certain number of students and only those that would appear in class.

There was always an administrative aspect and as I went further in to my career the administrative tasks became the parts of your work that you were disciplined by and against. That is, if you were capable of managing huge amounts of administrative work without causing any letters or emails of complaint to be sent upstream then basically you were left to get on with whatever you were doing. I am fairly well organized and capable. I have managed a household, children, studying full-time and working part-time for all of my life. I am skilled in being able to prioritize my work but when I encountered questionable or unfair behaviors and brought that up with people higher up, I was often told "You're playing in the big league now". I was thinking this is not the big league and I am not playing. I had this general feeling that if I ever brought up something that was particularly difficult that back would come: "If you want promotion this is what you have to learn to put up with". I used to sit there and think, 'I don't want a promotion' because that's not what I was after, it was always the intellectual and collegial work.

I decided to go back to work on a part-time basis and I was reminded quite clearly what it was like to be a part-time person. I found myself increasingly having to do administrative bits and pieces that took up a lot of my time which encroached on my non-paid time. I was constantly bombarded by

emails from administrative staff telling me that I had failed to do this or that, or how processes didn't work that way anymore and for the new procedure there was a form I should have been using accessible from the cloud. I got this administration person ringing me to tell me that I hadn't completed my work-load spreadsheet and I remember saying to this person 'I can't even understand the spread sheet, I can't find anyone to help me complete and I am only part-time'. My choices were to do my job for the time I had been allocated or I could have wasted the whole two days filling out forms. The person I was talking to didn't seem to think that was even their concern or a valid reason for non-compliance. So being part-time means you're really full-time but you just don't get paid for it. I got over that because it was about coming back to work and trying to get back in to the way of things and understand the way things had changed. I was then offered a position that would take me away from teaching directly and it was framed as being in my best interests. I took up the new role and found myself much like 'Alice in Wonderland' falling down the rabbit hole of never ending pushing and shoving of regulations. It was a political minefield and I just wasn't able to cope.

Lies

What is valued is getting through a course without someone making a complaint about you or making sure you are laying the groundwork so there is no chance students would be able to come at you. Covering your back with students is what I call quelling: if you get a really abusive email always come back in a really soft or gently way especially if students were using language that was inappropriate. Doing anything to keep students quiet and happy seems to be valued more than working with integrity. When we work with students in ways that are unsettling and discomforting it is always done with respect and it is important for learning, but I would often hear rumblings on campus and you hear colleagues being spoken about by students and you know trouble is ahead.

I was constantly surprised when I brought up 'issues' with colleagues and I remember the first time I raised an issue in a meeting that I considered as being important in a particular discussion. It was about the rights of students and I was basically told: "You must understand that this is not any-

thing for you to worry about and this is what we have decided". My observation just got railroaded and I was thinking is this what we have become- no wonder students have a sense that they have bought a product because that is the focus: students can read the way institutions behave and act accordingly.

Notably, it was in my interactions with younger academics who behaved very differently from what I had expected. It took me ten years of working in academia before it was deemed I was good enough to do particular roles and, all of a sudden, I was encountering newly minted PhDs who were ruthless in their drive to rise through the ranks as quickly as possible. There was one colleague in particular who I stopped sending emails to as I figured it would be easier to resolve the issue by speaking on the phone as we were never going to be able to speak face-to face. I found myself confronted with a very different way of seeing and what it meant to work with someone. Their view of working 'collegially' was 'it is my idea or no way'. I reported the incident to a senior colleague and was told: "Yes, I can see what is going on here but there really isn't much I can do". I thought to myself I don't have the energy to fight anymore. I could see myself being positioned as the stick in the mud old person and I am not even that old. It is dog eat dog now in universities and I think it is very much of a case of "suck it up". It is a race to the top and younger academics coming into the university system will climb over anybody who gets in their way.

I have spoken to colleagues that I have an affinity with and their feelings are not too distant from mine, but they take a different approach and engage with the academy because they need to do it, they need a job, so they keep quiet. They don't raise too many concerns because they don't want to be seen to not be in on the vision or to not be heading in the same direction as the institution and buying the product they are being sold. People who do well have a poker face. There are those who can sit in a meeting and listen to what is going on around them without seeming to care about what it means

I remember walking back on campus after an absence and thinking that I had somehow turned up to the wrong place. It looked like a resort with a neatness and funkiness about it that made me think what a university should be like and I was left thinking this is what it looks like without any of the professional knowledge coming into it.

Make Believe

There has been a renaissance in my feminism in how I was experiencing and seeing what these experiences had actually meant. For the longest time, we get told and see women in academia in positions of power and imagine that in itself it is about change but it is not. What I found from what happened to me on returning to work and having had a great deal of experience looking after units of study was that there was no longer a need to work as a team to cross-fertilise ideas. There was limited contact with colleagues so that I couldn't bring up concerns I was having. It was a lonely place. I used to think there was some value given in doing really good, high quality, high integrity work, of being able to stand with your peers and talk about what you do and how you are doing the job. The philosophical positioning was always important but these kind of discussions have died away because people are now enabled to stand up and tell you how wonderful they are and how much work they are doing perhaps in the face of competition. There is a sense of if you don't want to die doing your job then you are just not up to it.

So where to now? It's been a really challenging endeavor to think back about who I am now when I am no longer an academic and that been difficult sometimes. Difficult to let go of as there is a certain amount of dignity that goes with the identity but that is not me anymore. When I have thought about all that has happened I don't want to be associated with certain kinds of academic work now. I sit back and watch what is going on with my former colleagues and I am pleased as hell I am not in there anymore. I once remembered thinking and feeling I was being one of those circus performers that juggle the plates. At the peak of what I was doing if felt like there were these big plates atop these big poles and I was constantly trying to keep them from crashing to the ground. That was my life and it was not just academic work on these plates but my personal relationship, my health: all of these things were being constantly managed and it didn't matter how much I worked I always felt it was never enough. There was a point when you know it felt that if I stepped back invariably some were going to fall and the choice was which one am I going to let go of and it was a horrible feeling. In the end I decided I didn't want to be that person, I didn't want to place myself in that position anymore, I didn't want to have to make those decisions about what I was going to let fall but also for that to be the narrative of my life.

Looking Back, Facing Forward

From the standpoint of an academic insider, there is a resonance to the story and in recognising 'I' in the personal involvements and emotional attachments of the narrative has a disquieting verisimilitude. To speak freely with openness and honesty and with criticality has been defined has the hallmark of the *parrhesia: a telling of truths back to power that has the capacity to cause offence and be a risky endeavor.*[17] To think critically and speak out of affect about the material and situational structures of everyday life is to acknowledge that in feeling, one is being, has become or is in the process of becoming in which there is a capacity to re-experience agency: of becoming ontologically and epistemologically re/attuned. As internal processes, feelings refer to a wider landscape of scenarios, associations and experiences that enables a rich vein of understanding to be unleashed. Emotional knowing becomes politically significant as it permits an individual vocality that may have been previously suppressed socially, culturally and institutionally. It is a unique way of getting to the stories that are often untold. Nias[18] suggests that emotions are rooted in thought, that separation of feeling from perception is not possible and how affective reactions to the task of teaching are connected to views of personal self, self-esteem, and professional efficacy:

> … emotions are not simply *in* teaching. They are also a response to the conditions under which it takes place and especially to the increasing frequency with which individual teachers have to defend their sense of who and what they are.

Parrhesia as a knowing and telling relation to being in the world provides a practice of attunement and of connection that speaks of a deep personal engagement, interaction and investment with 'what' and 'how' is material-discursive is put to work. Such perspectives may well be accused of being partial and fleeting but in their positioning they tell something of how self-representation is deeply entwined with self-documentation. Such documentations, I suggest, are becoming

increasingly recognisable as a shared experience derived from neoliberal practices across higher education institutions globally. The expression and representations of such experiences are drawing together voices invested in challenging the silencing of transformative pedagogies of hope[19] in the academy such as those gathered in this book. Speaking a truth back to power about how the educational, social and cultural experiences across higher education institutions are being driven a wider economic and political context is generating *parrhesiastic* dialogue that reveals a:

> … history without constants, tracing not developments but struggles, not the reconciliation of knowledge and things but the violent appropriation of interpretation, not the process of coming to fulfilment, but the processes of contingent unities and dispersions.[20]

These processes cannot be captured or represented as a homogeneous narrative but individual narratives can generate in response to critical questions about "Who is doing the talking?" "Where has this voice come from?" And, "Why?"

Authoring ourselves in transition moments when the self is faced with questions to do with identity, power and social being can reveal the extent how dominant ideologies impact on who we become and how we become. Lorde[21] notes how putting into words and speaking back is not only a process of making the tacit visible but is also an act of transformative resistance. *Parrhesiastic* dialogue can be fraught with consequences in which "each of us draws the face of her own fear – fear of contempt, of censure, of some judgement, or recognition, of challenge, of annihilation". In making unruly voices heard in the contemporary neo-liberal culture pervading higher education can invoke personal consequences and professional censure, however:

> The fact that we are here and that I speak these words is an attempt to break that silence and bridge some of those differences between us, for it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken.[22]

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5

Truth-Telling the Dark Tourism of Australian Teacher Education

Mat Jakobi

In this chapter I want to join colleagues who have noticed the creep of neoliberalism across our collective work in higher education that, for me, distracts and adds to the tasks still at hand of 'decolonising' and 'indigenising' Australian teacher education. In this discussion, I want to give attention to the complexities Aboriginal teacher educators like myself encounter in working on and within whitestream[1] Australian teacher education programs. The roles and responsibilities of foregrounding and embedding Aboriginal standpoints in everyday faculty of education teaching and learning risk becoming domesticated and rebranded not only in the more recent creep/stomp of neoliberalism and the commodification and consumption of 'higher education', but also, and perhaps more importantly, in the refracted, contoured and ongoing histories that situate our present lived-out branded reality of Australian settler colonialism.

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In this limited space, and more generally within the general Australian context, justice cannot be given in describing where and how the forces of both settler colonialism and neoliberalism share the same agendas of reconfiguring and assimilating Aboriginal personhood within a white nation state. Whilst we may have replaced the violent Doctrine of Terra Nullius[2] with what Lloyd and Wolfe[3] describe as the "shock doctrine of neoliberalism", the *foundational and* preconfigured spatio-moral internal ordering of the settler colonial state "forms a crucial terrain through which to understand the military occupation and the formations and practices of the neoliberal state". As such, current neoliberal reconfigurations of Australian higher education teaching and learning are adding new demands to the old labour realities for Aboriginal teacher educators. Working towards the Aboriginal standpoints of decolonising and indigenising Australian education systems and structures is increasingly measured by business-model approaches to higher education that are positioning and privileging 'performative' demands on practice, that strains the already complicated processes of critical settler colonial provocation.[4]

I argue here, as others have before me that the labours of 'indigenising' and 'decolonising' work and the truthing of Australian teacher education from Aboriginal standpoints is, and has always been, the core professional and cultural workload of Aboriginal teacher educators, and more generally those Aboriginal academics engaged in similar work across the university's teaching and learning programs. Phillips[5] writes that Indigenising higher education is a path towards emancipatory goals. It involves processes and practices that privileging indigenous worldviews, voices, language, history, images and stories and requires articulating distinctions of indigenous non-indigenous peoples and values. This indigenising is very much a separate project of decolonising settler systems that ultimately seeks to repatriate Indigenous lands, and to structurally resist, disrupt and unsettle the invasive settler logic of elimination.[6]

In this chapter, I discuss the local refracted encounter of settler colonialism and limitations of this encounter in the labour of indigenising and decolonising teacher education in terms of "dark tourism",[7] the visitation of memorialised suffering. Based on experiences of visiting such

places as a dark tourist, and as an Aboriginal teacher education *tour guide*, the chapter explores the challenges in designing and teaching *truth telling dark tours* from Aboriginal standpoints within teacher education. I argue that Aboriginal teacher educators like myself are booked out by predominantly whitestream teacher education students on rushed through 'package-deals', and that these 'tourists' are generally underprepared to understand the tour guide's commentary. The chapter explores whitestream institutional expectations of the Aboriginal teacher educator *tour guide* as, increasingly, the pre-paid 'student experience' dictates the curriculum and pedagogical destinations of these tours and poor 'trip reviews' may trigger surveillance. In this context the only purpose and function of the Aboriginal academic tour guide is to produce pain narratives that authenticate social justice programs that work to include but enclose Aboriginal difference and exert demands upon the tour guide to be less provocative, and more performative.

The Labour of Indigenising and Decolonising

Aboriginal labour in indigenising and decolonising Australian teacher education is more often done in isolation, and is a "one way burden" writes Bunda et al.,[8] whereby Aboriginal teacher educators are expected to "fill a gap within the university, merely by being present, embodying cultural difference without significant change to the status quo".[9] In this context Aboriginal teacher educators are expected to 'reconcile' and 'bridge' the wider Australian justice disputes and in this the illegal origins of the white nation settler state, whilst enclosed within structures of Australian universities currently calibrating neoliberal architecture and technologies. Bunda et al. argue that the institutional assumptions that Aboriginal justice disputes in Australian higher education can be resolved through these narrow frames of redistribution of opportunity, ascribes justice 'acts' "to *individuals*, and to 'communities' seen more as sets *of individuals*, than as *peoples*" and this "in many ways works against Indigenous hopes to sustain and extend – cultural life *as a people*, and as diverse *communities* within Indigenous peoplehood".[10]

Tuck and Yang[11] assert that decolonization is not a metaphor and the labours of Aboriginal teacher educators in making the room for practices and processes of Indigenising must be distinct project/s and separate from "other civil and human rights-based social justice projects" that can consume, and enclose Aboriginal difference, "with no regard for how decolonization wants something different than those forms of justice". Teaching at both macro and micro levels of the Australian cultural interface[12] where these justice disputes shape the justice-work of Aboriginal teaching and learning, Aboriginal teacher educators are expected to balance both the objective role of tutor, and/or colleague within the general teacher-learner social contract, but speak back, as the 'Aboriginal' 'object', through the production of content, and program delivery.[13] Phillips[14] writes that in this context, "Objects do not speak, resist, judge, hear, remember but rather are spoken of, judged by, silenced, and remembered in particular ways for particular purposes". This invisible professional and cultural workload ultimately concerns the positioning of sovereign and self-determining practices in structures that operate on differing and competing spatio-moral logics. Land[15] describes this labour as "undoing the ideological work of colonialism" where whitestream students and colleagues need to go through processes of "coming both to see and to deeply know" their own social locations, and the locations of 'others,' and that by "coming to see that how we see ourselves and whose interest we share has been constructed and inherited" they are also "coming to see how the idea of racial difference has been created and made real – as reflected in harsh lived realities". Foley[16] has identified the importance of Aboriginal professional labour in drawing attention to these in/visible logics, to "educate non-Aboriginal activists and supporters whose enthusiasm sometimes obfuscates their ability to comprehend notions of Aboriginal agency and self-determination". This work is 'stressful' for the Aboriginal scholar, and it makes for "distressing situations, which can sometimes lead to heated arguments".[17] The professional reality of this scholarship of indigenising and decolonising teaching and learning is that we as Aboriginal people know there is both agency for Aboriginal teacher educators to tell the differing, and often binary-framed narrative of difference, as the local refracted encounter of settler colonialism; but also the limitations of talking beyond, and against this encounter, and using

teacher education to move practice to new cosmologies that better reflect how we know and want to know ourselves and the world we live in, as Aboriginal people.

Dark Tourism

In more recent times, I have developed an increased cynicism to my work in Australian teacher education and the limitations of working within settler systems like higher education, that I read to be in constant states of rebooting and adjusting settler colonialism. I have begun framing my everyday practice in working with whitestream staff and students through the thanatological themes of Dark Tourism.[18] 'Dark tourism' refers to the thanatoptic tradition of contemplation of death, merged with travel and visitation to sites associated with suffering, war, incarceration and death that are memorialised or recreated and provide the visitor/viewer "actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death".[19] Stone[20] analyses a spectrum of dark tourism that has varied purposes, including conservatory ethics, political pedagogy and counter-stories of justice education. For example, Strange and Kempa argue for the cultural and political transformative potential of the Robben Island site in its signifying resistance to brutality and "the legacy and ultimate collapse of apartheid".[21] While much dark tourism is conceived within a truth and reconciliation framework, in *tourism packages*, death and suffering are now commodified for mass consumption with some level of inherent 'entertainment' value, though contained within the shifting moral and political landscapes that differentiate the sensation-al and 'dark' from 'darker' sensationalism, in terms of 'heritage' and 'authenticity'.[22]

I similarly frame the pedagogical and curricular dark tours as refracting the localised places where Aboriginal social and education policies and practices have caused much "death, disaster and suffering".[23] In this new framing I am coming to understand my labours within and against the settler nation state and the often fraught, and constantly moving positions I have as the dark tour guide and also the dark tourist, and my own desire to bear witness to mass sociological trauma and tragedy. In this

application of dark tourism to my work, I acknowledge the profound desire humans have to witness trauma, and as such, the urge to visit physical places of tragedy in our teaching and learning, and how these dark tours are both acts of memory and of vigilance. For me, this engagement with place and looking directly at the violence is both profound and profane, as this fascination with dark destinations brings me closer to what Rose[24] describes as the anthropocentric "witnessing of our own demise", and concerns the settler promise of a *good life* where, "violence and misery can be claimed as acts of well-intentioned assistance".

Here, I would like to share my reflections on a significant dark tour and the Khmer Rouge promise of a good life. Through state-sanctioned 'good willed violence', the Khmer Rouge converted Tuol Svay Pray High School in Phnom Penh into one of the many infamous torture, interrogation and execution centres that placed and operated the Cambodian Genocide. Although this school is well known, it was like so many other schools I had visited in my professional life as a teacher. I knew this place and looking through the added layer of the torture instruments that lay scattered across the site, I could also drill down through this layer to the ordinariness of the place, down to the universal, invisible logic that operates and structures the design of 'school' – the long row of classrooms, the quadrangle open space, even the way the school was tucked into the localised architecture of the inner-city Phnom Penh neighbourhood. Although it was impossible to not be fixated on the tools of the state-sanctioned torture that lay untouched-kept-purposely in a time-less space on this surface layer, it was important to not be fixated just on this and instead look into the *event* for the *structures,*[25] for what Arendt[26] describes as the banality of evil and the normalising of wickedness.

I remember thinking, as I watched the tour guide speak to her script, that she mirrored my work in guiding the whitestream gaze of students and colleagues. The blunt and sharp questions from dark tourists (including myself) are part confession, horror, empathy, sympathy, resistance and disbelief and speak back to the stressful and sometimes distressing work of this labour, in exposing and pointing at the normalised wickedness within the *Australian refraction* of the *promise for a good life*. For me, like so many of my Aboriginal colleagues, these dark 'transactions' with the whitestream means we are caught up in the repetitive cycle of teaching

to the trauma and tragedy and work with others, including the state, in order for onlookers to see they are not bystanders in these narratives, and hopefully do something, *next time,* so terrible *events* like genocide never happen again (but of course they do).

Pain Narratives and Trading the Other

Whilst the labours of Aboriginal teacher educators, and Aboriginal scholars more generally are working for these overarching collective Aboriginal standpoints, the "commodifying trends and the commercial nature of knowledge" situates the global commercial enterprise of "trading the Other", that "intimately defines Western thinking and identity".[27] Tuck and Yang[28] in their analysis of how the thoughts of the settler form the actions of the settler, write that the capacity for moral thought operates from self-justified settler rights to conquer. Expanding upon Descartes' ideas of personhood as self-evident in the 'thinking man', settler self-awareness can only be achieved in direct relationship to the necropolitical transfer of the Aboriginal difference. Whilst the settler can only self actualise through conquering, in this logic, 'the native' can only be seen through the 'pain narratives' that describe when our minds and our bodies get in the way of their project.[29] Aboriginal standpoints in teaching and learning work towards the settler's awareness that their thinking and actions in Australian teacher education will always be as incomplete as their incomplete 'settler' project. Whilst in my mind these pain narratives function to report upon the hemorrhaging of settler colonialism and modernity[30] as project, the new ordering of market forces, where the pain narratives of dark destinations coexist within individual-state relationships to economic and political prosperity, keep people like the tour guide in the Phnom Penh high school and myself 'trading the other' and witnessing our own demise. Importantly, these pain narratives of the dark tour speak truth and bear witness to the settler desire to conquer the bodies and territories of others in order to self-actualise. But this also constrains the tour guide who can only speak through the old and new currency of this violence. Whilst we work towards the embedding of Aboriginal standpoints in everyday teaching, we can only exist in this

work, through the 'shiny-side' state endorsed pain narratives. Using these frames to think about my own experiences as the dark tourist, it means the tour guide does not, and cannot exist in my imagination, outside the boundaries and limits of the school's dark tour.

In my own local context, Aboriginal people are never framed as forward-facing people, who have agency to think and dream, in self-determining ways. As Frankland et al.[31] write, despite the 'devastating losses amongst Aboriginal communities across Victoria over the past two hundred years' Aboriginal people were not 'helpless victims of the broader society'; nor 'merely noble savages and survivors'; but instead, and most importantly, dreamers that produced "incredible achievers and contributors" to the Aboriginal and broader Australian communities. This occurred despite "incredible social and attitudinal duress". In Frankland et al.'s sovereign claim of people who have 'lived for millennia' and not 'vanished', there is an historical, contemporary and future commitment for continuation and renewal, and to nourish the "strength and authority [of] complex cultures and ways of being",[32] and the right to dream and roam[33] as sovereign people.

I have reflected upon my visit to the Phnom Penh high school many times and the labouring in the repeated reconstructions of the violent "postmodern spectacles"[34] played out across the bodies and territories of the 'local'. Whilst the horrors of this place have left an indelible mark on my thinking, and as such my actions in teaching and learning, I have returned and thought about the role of the tour guide and how in my role as the Aboriginal teacher educator, I am both positioned as the 'speaking guide' and as the object of settler colonialism violence. This desire to pedagogically not turn *one's back* on oppression, violence and genocide underpins the labours of Aboriginal teacher educators like myself: to design dark tours with curriculum stopovers at 'physical' points along the study tour, aiming to draw whitestream students and colleagues into encounters with settler colonialism and to understand how this violence is epistemologically mapped into and across Australian societal and educational *pastpresent*. In this localised definition of dark destinations of Australian teacher education, there are the physical frontier genocide of Aboriginal people, and, as Wolfe describes,[35] the range of state-sanctioned structures and processes within *public* education and social policy that

worked towards eliminating cultural and political difference, including "child abductions, religious conversion, resocialization in total institutions such as missions or boarding schools, and a whole range of cognate biocultural assimilation".

On these refracted local dark tours – we ask whitestream students and colleagues to look where teachers 'just like us' become state actors, to perform and function as 'epicentres' that enact social policy as educational practice. Dark tourism, in this context, writes Rose,[36] brings a closer "proximity of pilgrimage and voyeurism" where the "soulscape" of responses include "guilt, respect, love, fear, and the face-to-face with unanswerable questions" that "leaves us all tangled up in uncertainties, commitments, questions, and more questions". As such, formal 'study' of these physical places of trauma, like children's homes, and the Stolen Generations are important Aboriginal memory-work of witnessing and recording survival. At the same time, and when used appropriately and within context, these accounts provide whitestream students and colleagues opportunity to critically frame how the white nationalist settler state of Australia uses 'education' to annihilate and/or absorb Aboriginal difference.

However, the purposes of dark tours are to forcefully shift the whitestream gaze from the victim, and the victim-statement (who is both their teacher/colleague and the object) back onto themselves.[37] Maintaining eye contact or being in the mutual gaze with the whitestream[38] means moving the back to the front. It is a process of working with them through what reads to be teleological dark tours of *events* and *destinations* and demonstrating where and how assimilative restraints and structures of settler colonialism attempts to disconnect and disavow the just-present from an unjust-past. In this process, settler illegitimate origins of nationhood are relegated to other times, or into geographical places, 'elsewhere', 'anywhere' not from here. Consequently, the cataloguing of past dark events and other destinations is well stocked in terms of curriculum studies and curriculum practices in teacher education. For example, writing on the Canadian refraction of settler colonialism, Marker[39] describes the 'native' residential schools were "neither truly residences nor truly schools" – and instead were "dark factories for eradicating Indigenous culture and for fabricating an assimilated Otherness; a civilizing of the savage and a confiscation of Indigenous lands."

Dark tours of physical places in Australia that situate and hold this violence, loom larger as places of curriculum interest than other less visible *displaces* that are *hidden in plain view* across the curricula, pedagogical, policy and intellectual territories that make up contemporary Australian professional practice. In this context, the classrooms of the settler school, and universities have never been *neutral* spaces for Aboriginal people.[40] The cultural forms of genocide and the "invisibilized dynamics of settler colonialism mark the organization, governance, curricula, and assessment of compulsory learning".[41]

Defining the everyday Australian classroom as dark destinations in teacher education and drawing whitestream students and colleagues into these other (dis)places and the current non-events of professional practice as dark tours is more challenging. As Donald[42] writes, "what is needed is curricular and pedagogical engagement that can traverse the divides of the past and present", where the spatio-teleological strategies of settler colonialism are contested, and where teaching and learning "of history, memory and experience are connected".

Displacing territorial disputes means whitestream students and colleagues find it difficult to see their own teacher-implicated selves in the ongoing violent settler colonial programs that situate school as the epicentre. For example, Aboriginal teens are increasingly removed from their families, and transferred from school to youth detention centres where, reduced back to the colonial non-status 'wards of the state', they can spend up to 23 hours of the day in isolation, and potentially subjected to tear gas, and long bouts of being tethered, restrained, with hooded sensory deprivation.[43] On this trajectory, the cultural sensory deprivation that is schooling increasingly becomes more violent, without a blink from the settler-state panoptic eye.

The challenge of speaking through these pain narratives, and to refract the localized structural encounter with settler colonialism, is that Aboriginal teacher educators are never thought of as having the moral agency to teach the settler anything useful about himself and the world he occupies, and instead we are valued by the settler to explain and show the aspects of the 'unknown' and the 'unobtainable' Aboriginal world.[44]

Labour in Old and New Economies

In this context, Aboriginal bodies and minds have always been territories that the settler seeks to conquer. Aboriginal teacher educators' positions, even in new all-inclusive 'academic personhood' and 'citizenship', will always be re/configured: based on value or the lack of value and the trading of Aboriginal minds and bodies into these old and new economies.

Whitestream logic has dominated in social policy from the earliest stages of colonialism through to contemporary times. Murphy[45] suggests that current social and education policy has merely undergone technical adjustments to retain assimilationist practices, but that the most significant change has been the coopting of Aboriginal people into these mainstream administrative structures. I am asked to be teacher, trader and increasingly technician, as new labour discourses of academic flexibility broaden the social contract of academic labour. Aboriginal self determining and sovereign practices are thus replaced with institutional demands to be self-managed and an innovative trader of the other. As such, this labour of working with whitestream students and colleagues is situated very much within the whitestream model of organizing the extraction of 'raw materials'. Newer neoliberal pressures of university practice to turn 'knowledge' to 'product', contour the domestic and global colonial 'trading of the other'. Increasingly, online global and cloud delivery spaces work to dislocate 'real-time' engagement and replace it with the intimately disconnected 'user-friendly' tropes. Where the native on-demand supplies the labour, forever waiting, like the tour guide waiting for me at the gate at the school.

Importantly, regardless of competing transactions that occurred on the tour of the Phnom Penh high school – the place-based knowledge, the transformational, the financial, the 'ally' – are both profound and profane, but most importantly, positioned as the tourist, I see they are were all in my favour.

In these frames, we can see that the authentic tour is not necessarily the dreamscape of the local, driven by contemporary desires to know themselves, despite the efforts of the conquer to use the bodies of the locals to self-actualise. Indeed, in the domesticating of the 'teacher education'

gaze, many teacher education programs offer enhanced kontiki-esque adventures for whitestream preservice teachers and their lecturers, where they too can fly in/fly out of remote communities, where they 'extract' a 'first hand teaching experience' off the backs of those who have suffered the endless influx of people trying things that have already been done, using dysfunctional 'teacher backpacks' in 'real-far-way' 'authenticity' that later becomes first hand 'altruism'.

The dangers of trading the other in domestic and global markets is that the tourist gaze of the other demands a "staged authenticity", where the 'locals', as Maoz writes, "sell their culture, history, and customs as major commodities, pose as the primitive and exotic, and preserve an authenticity that no longer exists or never did as conceived by these tourists".[46]

Similarly, Donald[47] writes of a dark tour of the Fort Edmonton Park, arguing that the organization of the reconstructed fur industry embodies the anthropological articulation of the 'other', where the "the space outside the fort walls" is dedicated to a "museum-like exhibit presumably depicting authentic renditions of Indian people and culture" and "inside the walls was a more industrious place where newcomers laboured in the interests of civilizing a country and building a nation". Whilst the physical sites replicate "this pattern of displaying Aboriginal peoples and Europeans of opposite sides of the palisades",[48] disavowing the real nature of cross-cultural trade, they contour the myth narratives of 'civilization', and the impending good life, like "the stories of our country that we have been told in school".[49]

Maoz[50] further argues that tourism and the relationships between "Western middle to upper class guests and Third World lower class hosts" is a form of imperialism and colonialism wherein "tourists, in their search for a pure and authentic past, project their desires onto the less developed, and the Third World becomes the playground of their imagination and a target to conquer and consume". The economies of trading the other and the global ordering of supplying the demand to hear the other's pain narratives are refracted in both the economic imperatives of mass 'global' dark tourism[51] that promoted places like the high school/torture centre, as a 'must do',[52] and in our own markets of higher education. University markets reflect similar trends and demands in commodifying Australian teacher education with mass enrolments in rushed through

core 'package-deals', the obligatory and increasingly compulsory Aboriginal subject to be completed before 'moving on' to 'study' something else.

In the neoliberal, globalised and 'new digital economies' of universities[53] increasingly the 'packaged deal' *secondary* opaque-dark tourists are entering into dark destinations.[54] They are unlikely to have an interest in 'the dark', or even understanding of the site's significance and they make this quite clear through their inappropriate, disrespectful behaviour.[55] This local gaze of tourists who are behaving badly, is "opposed to the locals, who supposedly feel constantly gazed upon", writes Maoz, and they "tend to live up to the expectations and images the locals have of them" whereas "the locals construct their gaze upon previous and numerous encounters with tourists. Consequently, their gaze may be closer to reality" though it can be "based on extreme stereotypes and images that may also be related to a colonial past".[56]

Whilst teaching and learning always requires some 'lights and sounds' showmanship to pedagogically engage, in the new and old economies of dark tours the demand for 'edutainment' masks the marketing of voyeurism that is exemplified in the whitestream sitting in the rows close enough to the *enclosure*, or lurking behind their screens (if they're there at all), to see and hear the suffering, but not close enough, nor long enough, and now even 'real enough', to be in the transformational pedagogical 'splash zone'. As dark tourists they can come dangerously close to asking profound questions about themselves,[57] but at the same time, white fragility inhibits their intersubjective witnessing of power and privilege, especially self-implicated roles in normalising violence in the everyday teaching and learning. White fright and fragility in the cultural interface, means bringing them any closer to the pedagogical splash zone, the tour guide risks being 'bad' and 'ungrateful'; and when Aboriginal localised counterclaims are pointed out, and used to interrupt, challenge and 'unsettle' the 'Whitestream', the tourists take it as "insult to all their effort… They take umbrage personally in the encounter",[58] with a "refusal to hear and recognise"[59] Aboriginal standpoints in the contact zone of the university.

Aboriginal teacher educators like myself have always risked polarised student reviews of our teaching and learning in Australian dark tours. Some anonymous student reviews reflect how Aboriginal teaching and

learning transformed student self-views and their sense of teacher-citizen-self in relationship with Aboriginal people, perspectives and places in the splash zone. However, the opaque-whitestream secondary tourists trip reviews become stabs in the dark.[60] They express that the tourists can't get beyond their emotional fragility – and being 'made to feel guilty'.

The challenge for Aboriginal teacher educators like myself is that student reviews, and the systems and measures used to catalogue my labours are situated in university-wide systems that have not the mechanisms to adequately gauge the pedagogical standpoints of critical provocation and transactions. Instead they are focused on my 'performance' to give a 'positive' student experience, that *privileges the whitestream learner, and ties me to new forms of accounting and surveillance of Aboriginal labour and productivity – where neoliberal mutual obligation replaces self-determining practices.* As Rose warns, these old and new anthropocentric forces mean dark tours risk turning pilgrimage into voyeurism, and, as bell hooks[61] argues, the refracted local accounts of "oppression, exploitation, and domination", are becoming replaced with 'buzzwords' such as "difference, the Other, hegemony, ethnography" that are separated and are separating from a "political and historical context".

Conclusion

Using dark tours to identify the lived-in logic of settler colonialism, rather than just the settler 'past actions', or action in 'other places' is central to the current projects of decolonising Australian teacher education, but this labour cannot speak to the whole project of indigenising Australian teacher education and using it to know ourselves and the world we live in.

However, if we do not attend to the projects of decolonising and indigenising, directed through the desires of Aboriginal people, the labour of Aboriginal teacher educators, like the tour guide, is at risk of shifting to one-sided transactional experience for the opaque tourists, whitestream students and colleagues. In this context the only purpose and function of Aboriginal academic tour guides are to produce pain narrative that legitimate and authenticate social justice programs that work to include but to

enclose Aboriginal difference. In my own reality this work is making me sick, a consequence of my embodying all of these opposing forces.

The labour of Aboriginal teacher educators like myself is to report the settler colonial violence but also to 'hack' the university and modernity[62] that makes space for the projects. In my mind, I need to shift from the tourist gaze of the third row and return to those who have sat in the pedagogical splash zone and engaged in the mutual gaze. Then, together, we can hold the fixative gaze of the victim-statement to the perpetrator and also look to those *pastpresent* people who engaged in the 'mutual gaze' and *did something*. This is the hard work, where our backs bridge those teleological strategies of settler colonialism to our present and future practices in teacher education.

Notes

1. Chris Andersen, "Critical Indigenous Studies: From Difference to Density". *Cultural Studies Review* 15 (2009) 80; Tracey Bunda, Lew Zipin and Marie Brennan, "Negotiating University 'Equity' from Indigenous Standpoints: A Shaky Bridge," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 16 (2012) 941.
2. Meaning 'empty land'; lands deemed unoccupied by Europeans in "discovery" claims – see Robert J. Miller, Jacinta Ruru, Larissa Behrendt and Tracey Lindberg, *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
3. David Lloyd and Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonial Logics and the Neoliberal Regime," *Settler Colonial Studies* 6 (2016) 109; 109.
4. Donna J. M. Phillips, *Resisting Contradictions: Non-indigenous Pre-service Teacher Responses to Critical Indigenous Studies*, Unpublished Thesis (Ph.D.) (Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology, 2011).
5. Donna J. M. Phillips, "Resisting Contradictions".
6. Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (London/New York: Zed Books, 1999).
7. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster (London: Cassell, 2000).
8. Bunda et al., 946.
9. Bunda et al., 941–2.

10. Bunda et al., 942, Original italics.

11. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 1 (2012) 1; 2.

12. Martin Nakata, "The Cultural Interface," *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 36 (2007) 7; Sandra R. Phillips, Jean Phillips, Susan L. Whatman and Juliana M. McLaughlin, "Introduction: Issues in (Re)Contesting Indigenous Knowledges and Indigenous Studies," *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 36 (2007) 1.

13. Bronwyn L. Fredericks, "Utilising the Concept of Pathway as a Framework for Indigenous Research," *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 36 (2007) 15.

14. Donna J. M. Phillips, "Resisting Contradictions", 46.

15. Clare Land, *Decolonizing Solidarity. Dilemmas and Directions for Supporters of Indigenous Struggles*. (London: Zed Books, 2015), 86–87.

16. Gary Foley, "Foreword," in Clare Land, *Decolonizing Solidarity. Dilemmas and Directions for Supporters of Indigenous Struggles* (London: Zed Books, 2015) ix; x.

17. Foley, x.

18. Lennon and Foley, *Dark Tourism*; Phillip R. Stone, "A Dark Tourism Spectrum: Towards a Typology of Death and Macabre Related Tourist Sites, Attractions and Exhibitions," *Turizam* 54 (2006) 145; Phillip R. Stone and Richard Sharpley, "Consuming Dark Tourism: A Thanatological Perspective," *Annals of Tourism Research* 35 (2008) 574.

19. A. V. Seaton, "Guided by the Dark: From Thanatopsis to Thanatourism," Journal of Heritage Studies, 2 (1996) 234; 236.

20. Phillip R. Stone, "A Dark Tourism Spectrum".

21. Carolyn Strange and Michael Kempa, "Shades of Dark Tourism. Alcatraz and Robben Island," Annals of Tourism Research 30 (2003) 386; 394.

22. Phillip R. Stone, "A Dark Tourism Spectrum".

23. Deborah Bird Rose, "Anthropocene Noir," Arena Journal 41/42 (2013) 206; 211.

24. Rose, "Anthropocene Noir", 211–212.

25. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8 (2006) 387.

26. Hannah Arendt. *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil* (London: Penguin Classics, 2006).

27. Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing methodologies,* 89.

28. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "R-Words: Refusing Research," in *Humanising Research*: Decolonizing Qualitative Inquiry with youth and

Communities, ed. Django Paris and Maisha T. Winn (Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage, 2014) 223.

29. Rose, "Anthropocene Noir".

30. Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti, Sharon Stein, Cash Ahenakew and Dallas Hunt, "Mapping Interpretations of Decolonization in the Context of Higher Education," 4 (2015) 21.

31. Richard Frankland, Muriel Bamblett and Peter Lewis, "'Forever Business': A Framework for Maintaining and Restoring Safety in Aboriginal Victoria," *Indigenous Law Bulletin*, 7 (2011) 27; 28.

32. Frankland et al., 28.

33. Irene Watson, "Settled and Unsettled Spaces: Are We Free to Roam?" in *Sovereign Subjects: Indigenous Critical Engagement*, ed. Aileen Moreton-Robinson (North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2007), 33–46.

34. Stone, "A Dark Tourism Spectrum", 148.

35. Wolfe, "Settler colonialism", 383.

36. Rose, "Anthropocene Noir", 21.

37. Tuck and Yang, "R-Words: Refusing Research".

38. Darya Maoz, "The Mutual Gaze," Annals of Tourism Research 33 (2006) 221.

39. Martin Marker, "Indigenous Knowledges, Universities, and Alluvial Zones of Paradigm Change," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, (2017), 2.

40. Phillips, "Resisting Contradictions", 26.

41. Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor", 2.

42. Dwayne T. Donald. "Forts, Curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage: Imagining Decolonization of Aboriginal-Canadian Relations in Educational Contexts," *First Nations Perspectives* 2 (2009) 1; 5.

43. See for example Thalia Anthony, "Why are So Many Indigenous Kids in Detention in the NT in the First Place?" August 4, 2016.

44. Deborah Bird Rose, "Nourishing Terrains - Department of the Environment and Energy." (n.d.).

45. Lyndon Murphy, *Who's Afraid of The Dark? Australia's Administration in Aboriginal Affairs*. Unpublished Dissertation for Master of Public Administration (The University of Queensland: Centre for Public Administration, 2000); 6–7.

46. Darya Maoz, "The Mutual Gaze", 224.

47. Donald, 2.

48. Donald, 2.

49. Donald, 3.
50. Maoz, 223.
51. Stone, "A Dark Tourism Spectrum".
52. See for example Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Phnom Penh (n.d.).
53. Marker, 2.
54. See for example, Peter Hohenhaus, "Darkometer - Dark Tourism – The Guide to Dark & Weird Places Around the World".
55. See for example, Shahak Shapira, "Yolocaust – The Aftermath".
56. Maoz, 229.
57. Rose, "Anthropocene Noir".
58. Bunda et al., 945.
59. Bunda et al., 944.
60. Mat Jakobi, "A Stab in the Dark. Anonymous Student Evaluations of Aboriginal Teacher Educators," Teachers College Record, Commentary, 21 September, 2016.
61. bell hooks. "Critical Interrogation: Talking Race, Resisting Racism", para 2.
62. Andreotti et al.

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6

Wrestling with Career: An Autoethnographic Tale of a Cracked Academic Self

Barbara M. Grant

Versioning 'Academic Career'

Compiled from memories, anecdotes and writing 'experiments', this chapter tackles the conundrum of 'academic career' by giving a version of my own from its middle. While my initial instinct was to place the word career under erasure (~~career~~) – as dangerous but useful – this writing released a streak of "shocking old woman".[1] I found I'd rather drive a stake into its heart so that all the rich blood of individualism, competition, envy and ambition, fed so handsomely by the self-regarding economy of neoliberalism, drains away. I want us to find other words to evoke and make sense of our complex, often pleasurably satisfying but just as often fraught, academic lives.

Taking a lead from Isabelle Stengers and colleagues' *Women who make a fuss*, in what follows I offer a critical testimony of an 'academic

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career', a form of "conditioned agency"[2] that requires critical investigation. In particular, I make a fuss over the steps towards professorship, some of which I have already taken despite deep ambivalence. In making this move, in both submitting to *and* refusing a series of academic norms for complex affective and situated reasons that I attempt to disclose, I understand I risk my own poise and respectability. Yet I also understand that the dilemmas I face will not be mine alone, that they are a feature of the structured context within which I/we work. As academic women, we arrive into a story that has been going on long before we turned up and within which we must make ourselves recognizable. Judith Butler says:

> If I try to give an account of myself, if I try to make myself recognizable and understandable, then I might begin with a narrative account of my life, but this narrative will be disoriented by what is not mine, or what is not mine alone.[3]

Not only is the story I tell here "not mine alone" but, crucially, it is written to be read as "a version", which "signals the existence of other versions, versions which do not tell the same story".[4] Emphatically, it is *not* galvanised by the thematic ambition characteristic of academic work "to silence others"[5] nor to denounce versions of this story that embrace the step towards professorship. For women (at least), becoming a full professor[6] holds especial significance in that we have long been – and are still –underrepresented in this rank. For this academic woman writer, though, that significance is tainted by a range of experiences, observations and dispositions shaped by deep biography and academic life experiences, both situated in particular and overlapping historical times, and neither of which are finished. (I am not finished.)

Being at Odds with 'Career'

After presenting as part of a symposium at the 2016 Academic Identities Conference in Sydney, my colleague/co-presenter and I fell into conversation about academic careers. During my presentation, in order to

highlight the risk of complicity with an institutional order of which we might otherwise be critical, I had included a paraphrase of Virginia Woolf's warning:

> Today now more than ever, we can remember that not only did Virginia Woolf specifically caution her sisters against attempting to make a career at the university but, more generally, against joining the procession of those who are engaged in these professions where it is a question of "making a career". Earn your living soberly, not a penny more than necessary, she had written, or else you will be trapped in this process that fabricates prostitutes defined by the competition for prestige, honors, and the devouring quest for a power that is always derisory, never sufficient.[7]

My colleague said something like this: "Eww, that phrase 'academic career', it's revolting."[8] As I remember it, she went on: "When my Head of School asks about my career plans, I tell him firmly that I don't have any." I was struck by her bluntness. I'm not sure I've ever actually been asked about my 'academic career' per se, but I have routinely been asked by well-trained Heads where I see myself in five years. Unlike my deliciously forthright colleague, I'm always struck (defensively? defenselessly?) dumb. Somehow, at exactly the same time as I find the idea derisory, I feel like a failure because I don't have a five-year plan.

What is a 'career'? When did we start to talk about academic work and academic lives in this way, instead of with terms like 'vocation' or 'profession'? And, why in my mind, has it become such a word that I want to stab it in the heart?

My old dictionary tells me that career means (innocuously) "progress or general course of action of a person through life, or through some phase of life, as in some profession or undertaking, some moral or intellectual action", or "an occupation or profession, esp. one requiring special training, followed as one's life-work".[9] Interestingly, the adjacent entry is "careerism, *n*. devotion to a successful career, often at the expense of one's personal life, ethics, etc." That's more like the meaning I have come to associate with 'making a career'. But why?

Old Roots/Routes

In my family, no-one talked of 'career'. Both my parents went to training college, emerging as roving physical education specialists for primary (elementary) schools. My father also had a BA in history (which, in Virginia Woolf's terms, makes me the privileged daughter of an educated man[10]): I still do not understand how or when he did this although I have a sense it was when he was in the army towards the end of the war – part-time university study was common in NZ universities in that period. As soon as my parents married, my mother gave up her position to focus on having babies, which she did with gusto. My father reluctantly lingered in teaching for a couple of years – family legend is he hated the control and discipline issues but I know he also hated institutional politics. And in the specialist service, as elsewhere, there were those. He became for a while a builder with his retired-farmer father, then a shop-worker in a retail menswear shop, then for a long time a corner-shop draper. He did not seem to set much store on *what* he did, although he did what he did in a principled way: he just had to support a wife and large family. Much later in life, just as the drapery business failed, he inadvertently and gladly returned to lecturing in physical education at a small Catholic training college.

Worldly ambition, career, these were not things of value in our staunchly Catholic home, where good living as prescribed by the Church was of primary value and concern to our parents. The seven children scattered across all forms of work: teaching, business, physiotherapy, secretarial work, car mechanic, journalism. (Later on, two of us ended up in different jobs as a result of mature-student degrees.) There was not much sense that one thing was better than another; the condition of our souls was another matter entirely, one that worried my father until he died.

Career, then, is instinctively a vulgar term for me, because of its association with unseemly ambition, an association that has intensified since the advent of socially lauded greed in the 1980s. It speaks to me of the careerism defined above, in the way that leadership in the university *now* speaks to me of 'leaderism', a neoliberal understanding of leadership as measurable activities mainly valuable for achieving self-serving purposes such as promotion. I don't remember ever thinking in terms of having any kind of career (and, yes, there was a gendered dimension to this as

well). The words of profession, vocation or just plain 'work' or 'job' were my currency. Moreover, until recently, I don't remember thinking about what I was doing during my academic life in terms of having or furthering a career. I did the things I didn't have to do because I found them interesting and worthwhile in terms of what I thought the university should or could be, or because they gave me an opportunity to work with others whose company I admired and/or enjoyed, or because I was asked to (sometimes flattered, sometimes obliged, sometimes obliging).

When did 'academic career' enter the common language with which we speak about ourselves? I remember the arrival of the term 'early-career' academic a decade or so ago: when working in academic development or conducting research into academic work, it was useful shorthand to describe a group of academic staff who might have distinctive needs. My partner reminds me of the older, not much used, term 'career-grade', which referred to the expected level that most academics would reach in their working lives. On a scale that went from lecturer to senior lecturer to associate professor to professor, for a long time the career grade was up against the hard bar in the senior lecturer scale. You got there after about 15 years and you stayed there (and gender was not neutral in this). The idea, now ubiquitous in academic culture, that if you are not applying for promotion there is something wrong with you is a relatively new (and, to me, unpleasant) one.

Nowadays advice books and development programmes targeting early-career academics abound: telling people how to successfully navigate the first stage of an academic career (typically pre-continuation/confirmation or pre-tenure), like doctoral education, has become an industry. It's ironic how these guides have proliferated in a climate of increasing doctoral awards alongside widespread pessimism about the prospects of actually getting academic positions and the precarious status of many of those on offer.

Career as Litany[11]

In 1984, as third-year Education undergraduate and part-time single mother on state benefit, stumbling across four hours' weekly volunteer tutoring with struggling undergraduates.

In 1985, Student Learning Unit born, four 'tutors' on four hours each.

In 1986, four hours of tutoring per week grows to eight; begin teaching 12-hour essay-writing course for Continuing Education.

In 1987, luxuriate in 15 hours' paid work per week but terrified that unplanned (not unwanted) pregnancy will bring the whole thing to a close (it doesn't). Second daughter is born, she cries a lot for the next 12 months.

In 1988, hours grow (maybe, my memory is so unreliable).

In 1989, begin Master of Arts in Education part-time, still working part-time on year-to-year contracts.

In 1990, 1991 or maybe 1992, finally become full-time, permanent Senior Tutor (ST).

In 1991, suspend MA to resume part-time single-mother life, this time with two daughters of three and 13.

In 1991–1992 and again for half of 1993, share Acting Directorship of (now) Student Learning *Centre* (SLC).

In 1993, complete MA and successfully apply for promotion across first ST bar. With Acting Director colleague, apply for position SLC Director – unsuccessful.

In 1994, take half-time secondment into Higher Education Research Office (HERO), begin working with academic staff.

In 1995, still seconded to HERO, successfully apply for promotion across another ST bar.

In 1996, leave SLC to take full-time, permanent STship in HERO.

In 1996, take first sabbatical leave – seven long months in which to imagine myself as a proper academic.

In 1996, after restructure, HERO becomes Centre for Professional Development (CPD).

In 1997, begin PhD.

In 1999, successfully apply for promotion across final ST bar.

In 2002–2003, Acting Co-Director, CPD for 18 months.

In 2005, another restructure, CPD becomes Centre for Academic Development (CAD).

In 2005, PhD awarded just in time to turn 50, successfully apply for transfer from ST to Senior Lecturer (SL).

In 2007, Head of Academic Practice Group, CAD for 12 months.

In 2007, unsuccessfully apply for promotion across SL bar.

In 2008, successfully apply for promotion across SL bar.

In 2009, Acting Director, CAD for 12 months.

In 2010, Acting Director, SLC for 12 months.

In 2010–2011, Deputy Director, CAD (for real – no longer 'acting'!) for 18 months.

In late 2010, successfully apply for 'senior' academic position in the Faculty of Education. (Surprise because I'd never thought I'd leave the academic development work I loved – but various internal and institutional changes had leaked the love away.)

In late 2010, first grandson is born.

In late 2011, take up Associate Professorship in Faculty of Education.

In 2012, father dies suddenly, mother's independence unexpectedly under question.

In 2012, attending a colleague's inaugural professorial lecture – Dean says to me, "it'll be your turn soon". I feel flattered even though I don't recognise myself in his words.

In 2013, during annual performance review, reviewer asks me to consider what I need to add to my CV to become a professor. I am sick at the thought of doing anything new with that end in mind.

In 2013, become depressed enough not to want to enter a classroom.

In 2014, second grandson is born.

In 2015, frail and demented mother reluctantly enters residential care (where she has since thrived physically but is often homesick).

In 2015, become Chair of School's Postgraduate Committee and, soon after, Doctoral Advisor.

Sometime in the next five years or so, will probably begin the process of retiring …

What kind of career has this been? Although threaded by evidence of a determination to get promoted (perhaps a middle-child's obsession with not being taken-for-granted), my career has been mostly accidental. Unsought-for opportunities came to me via some crucial mentors: in particular, in the early days, two life-loving male academics who saw something in the self-doubting, part-time 'mature' student and gave that something a chance. These lucky breaks were punctuated by three critically painful experiences of receiving "a reminding slap"[12] from senior

academic women – professors – who put me in my place when, for example, as an undergraduate I sought access to an advanced course without prerequisites or, as a Senior Lecturer, support for applying for a teaching award. My place was *not* to put myself forward or to think I was in any way special or even deserving of fair or thoughtful treatment. Each time, I took a long while to recover.

In the first version of this litany, I did not include 'personal' events. But they insisted on their place. Maybe I've listened to too many senior academic women give stories of 'careers' that smooth over the complexities and tensions of their working lives, in particular how the messily personal has been political, sometimes to advantage. My 'personal events' (why do I want to put the term in scare quotes?) have had an impact on my academic life: they have affected the energy I've had available to give it, maybe even *wished* to give it, although of that I'm not sure. Perhaps mercifully, they have stopped it sprawling into every corner of my life. But they are confounded in my deep – cracked and cracking – ambivalence towards even aspiring to that apotheosis of an academic career: the professorship.

My Working Week

My bloke and I are, once again and with feeling, talking about our work-lives and their impact on our relationship.

Bloke: "You work long hours". (He is defending himself from a similar charge, poor sod.)
Me: "No, I work *broken* hours, wrapping my often-flexible academic work around the other things that are important to me."

Important things between Monday and Friday that are *not* work:

- Go twice to early-morning yoga
- Late-afternoon visits to my 93-year old mum in her rest-home

- Pick up my grandsons from school and crèche for one afternoon-cum-evening
- Walk the dog at least once a day, often twice
- Attend therapy to think through things – including my academic work-life – that need more than one mind
- Have a couple of dates with daughters and friends
- Sleep as much as I can!

As I wrote that list, I felt grateful for it: here is a self who is not just responding to institutional sticks and carrots. She is alive and well and connected to loving others.

Every so often I record my working week on a planner to see what is happening. I aim to trade long (but, yes, broken) week-days of work against work-free weekends. My records show me that I am usually working solid weeks (40–45 hours) and often in a very focused way. I still limit time for the social aspects of work-life, a habit I developed when I was working, parenting and studying. I regret this but it's the casualty of fitting everything else in and not falling over. By and large, the records show that, despite feeling very tired come Friday, I am not working gross weeks – and, happily, I can see there is some kind of 'balance' (how I've come to dislike that word) between my teaching and supervision, research and service. These days I'm avoiding 'leadership', although I'm doing it despite myself because recently my university has decided to reframe everything we do, pretty much (especially what can be counted), as leadership! The rhythm I have established is threaded by the gladness of being an academic, doing the work that I do, treasuring the freedoms to read, think, write, teach and otherwise act. Yet that same rhythm is too easily and often punctuated by feelings of panic about my glassy grip on those ever-burgeoning activities and responsibilities, the *deadlines* (now there's an evocative word), my fear that I will be found dead on the line, dead on-line.

In this working week, there is no time – and, more importantly, no desire – to think about what I might do that will make me properly professorial.

How I Became an Associate Professor

And yet, six years ago, I became an Associate Professor. It was an accident of sorts, a matter of serendipity and history. While looking at my University's list of job vacancies for a friend, I noticed the Faculty of Education was seeking to make a number of senior appointments in a diverse range of possible fields. The timing was about two years prior to Aotearoa/New Zealand's sexennial national research audit, the Performance-Based Research Fund: the Faculty needed to improve its audit outcomes and was looking to appoint experienced researchers. I was stunned to find the magic phrase "higher education" among the list of fields. The Faculty had never before shown any interest in higher education– indeed, the Master of Education (Adult and Higher Education) programme I had taught on for several years had been disestablished a decade or more earlier. The presence of higher education – "my" field – was an invitation I could not resist. I applied with the bottom line of being appointed as an Associate Professor and so, 12 months later, it came to pass. It was a sweet ride because, in applying for a new position rather than a promotion, I avoided writing yet another lengthy self-aggrandising application.

On (Not) Being a Professor: Tiny Stories from the Field[13]

She tells me, I'm finally a professor, it's what I've always wanted. Why do I feel so bad?

He tells me (carefully, thoughtfully, he knows I'm a bit crazy about this matter), I'm going to apply for professor, I don't really want to, but my Head thinks I should.

On being congratulated by me, a newly professored colleague grimaces with rage. She is remembering the insults of the previous failed bids. Through her rage, I re-live my own.

At a conference, I watch (with a mix of awe and revulsion) a colleague who is desperate to be a professor yet again make a beeline for the most important person in the room.

I talk with a grieving colleague who has just learned that a professorial bid has been unsuccessful. She tells me how today, the day after the news, others won't look her in the eye.

A newly professored colleague seems to no longer want to do the service she did so willingly on the way to making it.

I review the CV of a professor and, once again, find it hard to see what is 'professorial' there.

En route to a conference, my friend tells me she really wants to become a professor. No-one has ever said that to me before. I consider if I might want to be one too but there is a confused buzz in my head and in my heart.

On (Not) Being a Professor: A Mash-Up of Unholy Elements

Let me try to unpick the unholy elements of this confused buzz. In doing so, I *pick my words* to stay true to my desire to offer a version that "signals the existence of other versions"[14] without silencing or denouncing them. I know that if I feel caught in a painful predicament around wanting and not wanting to be a professor, others will too: "The norms by which I seek to make myself recognizable are not precisely mine. They are not born with me; the temporality of their emergence does not coincide with the temporality of my own life".[15] Butler's words remind us the experiences and dilemmas of academic life are something we arrive into even though they feel, as we live them, uniquely personal.

Unholy Element 1 If I apply to be a professor, I'm putting myself back in that place of being an uppity woman – who is "inviting the slap"[16] – and, despite welcoming the persona of the post-menopausal "shocking old woman … who can no longer be counted on to do what was assumed they would always do",[17] I still quail at the prospect of rejection.

Unholy Element 2 If I *do* apply to be a professor, some junior women colleagues say it will give them heart they can be one too. And yet, I'm aghast at the increasing number of young women who come into our

Women in Leadership programme (I've been involved since its inception in 2000) who think it's a reasonable *and laudable* ambition to want to be a professor by age 40. Many of them look exhausted and it's only February, towards the end of summer break.

Unholy Element 3 If I *don't* apply to be a professor, some junior colleagues – especially those with children – say it will give them heart they don't have to get caught up too much in pursuing this goal.

Unholy Element 4 If I apply to be a professor, I will have to spend precious hours of my life writing self-promoting schtick and asking others to do it for me as well. Already I don't have enough hours in the week for the many things important to me.

Unholy Element 5 If I apply to be a professor, and I become one, I'll be at the top and I'll have that lovely label. (Although, when I became Associate Professor, my dear old dad said wonderingly, "Congratulations – and, tell me, who exactly will you be an assistant to?" Made me laugh – and grimace.)

Unholy Element 6 If I become a professor, that means taking more (public) money I don't really need[18] and which, in the bigger picture, the university can't afford. (The "bigger picture"? Well I know our VC gets three times as much as a professor at least but, also, I reckon public universities can't afford to have too many professors, not when there are barely enough academic and professional staff to do all the work in a reasonable working week. As I write this chapter, our VC sends out an update telling us that the university has amassed a several-million dollar deficit "driven mainly by increased staffing costs and asset-related costs" [18/10/17] and rumours of further staffing cuts have begun.)

Unholy Element 7 If I apply to be a professor, I'm going after something of ambivalent, even dubious, merit to me. It's hierarchical, elitist and often doesn't seem to have much to do with the responsibility of being a professor: being willing to lead not only in terms of my discipline or field

of studies, or my own brilliant career, but also being willing to take oner-
ous leadership roles in the university through difficult times (more on
this below), to speak up with unpopular views in Senate. And when
attending Senate, I noticed usually only the same one or two professors
ever spoke up against the constant internal raids on academic values and
culture. Observation: this unholy element is shadowed by another, a fan-
tasy that flickers on the edges of my imaginings. Who is this professor
who haunts my thoughts and against whom many real professors disap-
point? The professor who becomes so by virtue of her merits as a scholar,
who has gravitas, who is a catalytic figure for the discipline? As I write
this, I know how naïve it sounds, and I suspect it's deeply gendered as
well. Sigh.

Unholy Element 8 If I apply to be a professor, aren't I engaging in some
kind of fraud? Think about those working weeks with their distracted
attention to academic work. Wouldn't I be pretending I've had another's
academic life with a different set of circumstances and *commitments*? My
own has been an accidental zig-zagging kind of an affair, more of a *career-
ing* (or careening) than a career. My academic work has often taken sec-
ond place to the rest of my life – no catalytic figure of commitment to the
discipline here. And my desire to 'profess' has been faint – betrayed even
quite recently by moving sideways in my work at a stage when I had
achieved a reasonable level of recognition in my former field.

Unholy Element 9 If I apply to be a professor and am successful, I will feel
obliged to take leadership roles of the kind I have taken willingly in the
past but no longer have an appetite for. More, such roles would likely
compromise the delicate balance of my private care responsibilities. But a
professorship is the *one* position in my university with an explicit require-
ment for departmental leadership: "all Professors are eligible to serve (and
may be required to serve) as Head of Department".[19] This requirement is
one I believe professors must take seriously, perhaps especially in difficult
times, when the weight of their position may provide a needed counter-
balance to other forces, and when other staff may be given some shelter
by the protective mantle of their leadership.

Unholy Element 10 As I grow older, I can feel myself 'leaving' the university even before I have gone. The contemporary university – *my* university – disappoints me deeply. My withdrawal seems to apply particularly to all the bits of it entangled with self-sought status, prizes, awards. What's more, and somewhat dishearteningly, institutional leaderism and our national research audit system have together ensured that nearly everything we do – or might do – is so entangled!

Determining Our Own Existence in the Cracks

> Of course, [within philosophy, within the university] there are still interstices where one may breathe. … [A]n interstitial place is not a place for heroic resistance. It only exists if it is capable of holding fast, of determining its own make-up, of fabricating its own *raison d'être*, that is, if what it does is also what keeps it alive.[20]

The unholy elements have piled up, the scales fall, and the (in)decision is plain. There, I think, I have said it: today, at least, I cannot (try to) be a professor because it does not matter that much to me, neither being it nor doing it, *and* because it matters too much, as I realise when I think about applying and *not* getting it but experiencing the shame of getting the slap instead. In spite of some sticky fragments of longing to attain the highest academic position, the facts of my life bear staunch witness to a barely chosen lack of professorial material/mattering, as does the rhythm of my weekly commitments and the logic of my daily decisions about how to spend precious time.

My ambivalent place is also an interstitial one, not so much of "heroic resistance" as of quotidian refusals and acceptances. In this way, I try to keep open the crack of my academic life inside the disturbing place of the modern public university: to let the air blow through, to keep myself (and others) refreshed, to determine, in Stengers and Despret's words above, my "own make-up". Even as I make these complicated, ambiguous, tiny and sometimes unsatisfying or even painful determinations, I seek to hold onto the humbling possibility that, tomorrow even, the unholy elements may fall on the scales of ethical imagination in a different

way. If the balance tips, I may see another version of these things that matter so much to me, indeed of my academic life going forward. And take a different step.

Notes

1. Isabelle Stengers, Vinciane Despret and Collective, *Women who Make a Fuss: The Unfaithful Daughters of Virginia Woolf* (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2014/2011), 113.
2. John Morrissey, "Regimes of Performance: Practices of the Normalised Self in the Neoliberal University," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 36 (2015): 628.
3. Judith Butler, "Giving an Account of Oneself," *Diacritics* 31 (1991): 26.
4. Stengers et al., *Women who Make a Fuss*, 62.
5. Ibid.
6. The category 'professor' in the British-based system, that Aotearoa/New Zealand subscribes to, refers to a position traditionally reserved for a small minority of academics judged to have reached a standard of "international eminence in their field" (*Academic Standards for Research Fellows, Senior Research Fellows, Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Associate Professors and Professors*, The University of Auckland, HR Policy, p. 15, 20, 25). Traditionally that eminence was reserved for research activities but, in more recent times, people have become professor on the strength of (presumably also "international eminence" in) teaching or service. In 2017, 323 of staff at my university were professors (15% of 2189 academics), and 90 (28%) of these were women; overall, the proportion of professors relative to other academic ranks has steadily increased in recent years (eg in 2006 there were 174 professors, 9% of 1956 academics).
7. Stengers et al., *Women who Make a Fuss*, 150.
8. Throughout this chapter, I use many snippets of colleague-talk garnered over the past decade or so. Where the comment was in some way specific, I sought individual consent; most though were made in one form

or another by divers colleagues. In Butler's (1991) terms, they "arrive late", reflecting pre-existing structural realities of academic life as much as personal ones.

9. *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language: The Unabridged Edition*. (New York: Random House, 1967), 223.
10. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas* (London: Collins Classic, 2014).
11. Litany is defined as "a prolonged or monotonous account", *Random House Dictionary,* 836.
12. Stengers et al., *Women who Make a Fuss*, 96.
13. See Endnote 9 above.
14. Stengers et al., *Women who Make a Fuss*, 62.
15. Butler, "Giving an Account," 26.
16. Stengers et al., *Women who Make a Fuss*, 96.
17. Stengers et al., *Women who Make a Fuss*, 113.
18. A thoughtful reader reminds me you don't *need* to take the money.
19. University of Auckland *Academic Staff Collective Agreement 2016–2017*, 18.
20. Stengers et al., *Women who Make a Fuss*, 45–46.

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7

Affective Subjectivation in the Precarious Neoliberal Academia

Paola Valero, Kenneth Mølbjerg Jørgensen, and Kristiina Brunila

Introduction

The changes that academia has gone through in current neoliberal times around the world are relatively recent in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). Higher education in these countries is still conceived as an important feature of democracy, and equal opportunity of access to higher education has been part of policies of social and economic development since the 1960s.[1] As a consequence, Nordic universities are (still) mainly financed by the national governments, and they offer relatively stable employment to their staff. However,

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the expansion of the recent neoliberal rationality in the state and its institutions has also touched Nordic universities in significant ways. They have been the target of political intervention towards a competition, market-driven steering of research and teaching.[2] Researchers in these countries are now facing the pressures of national and global, neoliberal higher education policy with demands for entrepreneurship, efficiency and performance.[3]

While globally and in the Nordic countries there is a mass of critical literature related to the negative effects of the neoliberal ethos in academia, it is surprising how little critical analysis there is about how we, academics, are deeply entangled with the very same neoliberal ethos that we point out as a "cause" of our many troubles. In this paper, we want to discuss how the neoliberal ethos works concretely in framing and affecting the conditions of possibility for what kinds of subjects we, academics, can become. Drawing on Judith Butler's[4] thinking, we use the term *affective subjectivation* to describe the processes by which people are inclined to turn themselves into subjects within the context of precarious academic life. Affective subjectivation is seen as the effect of a particular way of governing, which fabricates subjectivities prone to operate productively in increasingly economised and marketised environments. When the neoliberal ethos becomes inscribed in all spheres of life, precarity expands as a condition and a process of insecurity generated systematically through a celebration of individual performance, creativity and entrepreneurship, which run parallel with an impoverishment of material conditions. The neoliberal ethos thus generates a heightened sense of instability, social isolation, anxiety, expendability, disposability, and moral failure in people,[5] which are productive for the framing of desired subjects and for centralizing power.

The articulation of affective subjectivation evidences that "neoliberalism" is not simply an external power that influences universities, their organization and the people in them. Nowadays the neoliberal ethos is embodied in the doings, actions and emotions of the people involved in everyday work in universities. It is instantiated in how researchers and research institutions generate and operate through a constant ambivalence between, on one hand, an affect of anxiety, insufficiency, competitive entrepreneurship, and violence, and, on the other hand, an affect of

positive optimism, self-improvement, and contempt. It is in the constant interplay of these ambivalences that mechanisms for effecting precarious neoliberal subjectivities are to be found.

Focusing on precaritisation as a technology for production of affective subjectivation allows us to unravel the "public secrets"[6] of how academics are inclined to turn themselves into subjects. The term "public secret" refers to a kind of taboo that nobody mentions but that is very familiar to all. The vulnerability of the individual is not openly revealed and is kept in silence, as a secret that all know. Instead all problems are personalised as signs of deficit: the lack of strength of those who are not suited to win the competition of the fittest. Affective subjectivation needs public secrets in order for power to work. Subsequently, as a form of resistance, these "public secrets" are what we want to challenge.

We start out with a set of stories that we have crafted based on what we have experienced and heard from other colleagues. The stories help to open the "public secrets" of affective subjectivation in Nordic academia. The stories shed light on different though interconnected dimensions of this becoming. Following the stories, we unfold the concepts and connect them to the stories.

Facing the Firing Squad

It is up to you. If you truly accept responsibility for your life, you will be able to release all shame, blame, anxiety and other resentments and reach your true potential as a researcher.

Duty of secrecy. Information cannot be disclosed about strategic matters. In this case there is duty of secrecy about me —and any of the other colleagues— getting *the letter*, the feared letter, the one that was so well-crafted, the one that was so well pondered on who was, after the publicly secret criteria, "the employee who could be best dispensed off duty". It is only in private, confidential conversations with my wife or friends with no affiliation to the university that my secret dares to be put in words. It is only after some wine, in very dimmed light that a tear can roll down my cheek… Secrecy and silence are the weapons. Monday morning,

when the letter should be released, people walked quietly in the corridors and went to deliver their teaching and participate in meetings. It was an apparently normal morning, because "nothing" was happening. Silence felt like the discharge of bullets from a machinegun on the whole line of prisoners against a wall, facing a firing squad… The letter was fired by e-mail. Everybody waiting until 9:00 to check the e-mail that will bring the fatal news. Lucky them who can keep the silence of not being the ones wounded that day. Those who remained standing after the bullets could feel lucky to be standing. For them the letters were like fake bullets or the firing in a round of Russian roulette. They can go and continue bearing white shirts. My shirt is all blooded. My pride is hurt. How could I be the one that "could be best dispensed off duty"? I worked to exhaustion not to be sacrificed: publications, teaching, funding… there has to be something wrong because indeed I funded my own position; all my indicators were quite good. But here I am, with a soaked red shirt and the spot on my forehead… and in my heart.

Today, as I walk in the corridors, I doubt if colleagues —should I rather say competitors— talk to me out of pity, compassion, or necessity, or out of respect. I will be remembering the day that I enter into this new world, magical, fascinating, full of possibilities. I was thrilled by the chance of thinking something new… I think of my past years here and my many contributions. But they were not enough. Last month when the big project I am part of got approved, I was praised. Now I am discarded. I am angry. I am in rage. I am crashed. I feel dead. And I have to remain silent. Because words in this case will only reveal that I am the weakest link. The disposed. Never mind. In silence, I will pull myself together.

The Tyranny of Numbers

You achieved a great publication today. Joy comes from thinking that you are prepared for a higher achievement tomorrow.

From: Head of department <prefekt@uos.sc>
Date: Friday 22 December 2016 at 09:04
To: VIP-employees <vip@uos.sc>

Subject: Christmas greetings and year balance

Dear employees,

After a difficult start of the month with the retrenchment of colleagues, we are getting stabilized again. I can assure you that the department leadership has helped in the best possible ways people to move forward, and has also taken necessary steps to continue being an attractive workplace.

At this time, we are getting ready for our Christmas break and I want to look back at our performance:

- So far, our intake of external funding decreased in 1 million crowns during the past year. I thank all people who did the best effort for getting home much needed funding. I encourage all to do their best to reach a desired target of 25% of our budget in external funding next year.
- Our bibliometric indicators were also lower and therefore a decrease of 10% in Faculty funding will be expected. I encourage all to extend the effort for reaching effective publication in top channels. I would like to suggest collaboration with international top researchers be a strategy to boost our level of publication to at least 15%.
- Our intake in teaching has stabilized due to the necessary increase of the teaching targets for all. This will give us stability in the future.

I would specially like to cherish the colleagues who championed the bibliometric production. Here the list of top-ten publishing researchers in the department:

Rank, Name and position, Bibliometric indicator 2016 (BI)

1. Peter Petersson, Professor, Hot-Topic Research Centre (25 million funding intake), 10 BI
2. Marcus Marcusson, Professor tenure-track, Attractive Research Team (2 million funding intake), 7 BI
3. Sandra Rodriguez, Professor, Critical Research Unit (200,000 funding intake), 6.5 BI
4. Martin Martinussen, Professor, Hot-Topic Research Centre (0.5 million funding intake), 4 BI

5. Tom Tomsen, Associate professor, Hot-Topic Research Centre (1 million funding intake), 3.5 BI
6. Allan Alvenius, Professor, Attractive Research Team (0.8 million funding intake), …
7. Car Carls…
8. Maria…
9. …

[Cold winter morning, Mariah Carey's "All I want for Christmas" is playing in the background. A half cold cup of coffee on the table. Standing in the kitchen, opening e-mail on the mobile device with a red tag on the back, **Property of UOS**, just before rushing into the city to buy the last presents for the children…]

Mail from the head of department… Ah, Christmas greetings… The process of firing was not very good, I wonder how popular she is… OK, yeah, the fired colleagues could go to the psychological help office at the university… bla, bla, bla… Ah! Now come the numbers. One million less… 25% more, OK. 10% less bibliometric points… 15% less money, WOW! Internationalization, there goes the magic word again. Teaching, yeah sure, much more teaching for all, gosh I did not have a single break during the semester. Stability… hmmm…. Top-ten list. Top-ten list made public? Wow! Where am I… oh no. Not again. But, there has to be a mistake… Who is here: Peter, of course. Marcus... Marcus…, OK, good for him. Sandra. Sandra... What? Sandra??? She is good at something after all… Martin, Tom, ha! he scored less, his ego must be hurt. Allan… [looking down the table, feeling a bit dizzy] I did not make it. Carl… I am much better than him, I checked his profile recently, I did better I know… Sandra third? [feeling angry and upset] Martin… Allan sixth… There has to be a mistake. How did they calculate these scores; there has to be a mistake! I had to be top-ten, I had to make it this time!! Shit!

[Shuts the mobile device, **Property of UOS**. With a tear in the eye… and a feeling of emptiness in the stomach. Hands shaking and closing the eyes, she touches her temples… A sound becomes perceptible: the voice of a little girl talking and pulling mama's clothes…]

Yes, yes, I am coming… just a second sweetie, now I am here. Get your jacket on. We will get the presents now. And I will buy you a hot chocolate. Mom really needs a big, big cup of chocolate.

Manage Your Identity

H*elp*
E*nrich and*
L*ift the*
L*ives of*
O*thers*
(27 Useful Acronyms for Self Improvement, The Success Manual Online)

"Nobody really thinks that what you are doing is interesting."

"You are too theoretical. Get down to earth and do something that people like and find useful."

"You are not working with anybody anyway. You isolate yourself."

"The problem with you is that you are interested in too many things. Focus."

"You should join a time-management course so that you don't get stressed and learn to use your time effectively."

"You've got to get smarter here: Think how to maximize your writing."

"You can't say that you don't have time to research! You may say that you don't have time for administration; that you can do in your free time. But research? We are a research university."

"Your Key Performance Indicators are a bit… well… you can do better… You should do better."

"All in all, I think you have a serious problem with your personality. I think we should look for a professional coach so that you can get a more realistic picture of yourself."

Disrupting the Public Secrets

Instead of rolling up your sleeves and fighting life, back off, take a few deep breaths and relax. Remember, life is not an emergency unless you make it so.

In what follows, we start unpacking the stories and concentrate on three topics: precaritisation in academia as an organisation and the relationship between managers and academics; the governing through affect in the constant ambivalence between anxiety and self-development; and the power effects of these two together in creating neoliberal academic subjects.

The three stories display something we have been all too familiar with: the individualisation and disposability of individual academics; and the dynamics of the relationships between academics and managers. Above all, the stories tap into the ambivalences of affective subjectivation, and make explicit their effect in academics. They also reveal the thoughts, feelings, fear and anxiety; and at the same time illustrate how academics become productive subjects through precaritisation.

Prior to and in the aftermath of the execution of people, who some way or another didn't live up to the vaguely and ambiguously defined targets and goals of the institution, there is the blasting sound of silence: no talk, no communication. Everything takes place in secret because secrecy secures that no one can be held accountable, and that everything can be justified. The duty to keep decisions and events a secret means that any story can be created about the institution and people without the requirement or the bother of validation. Secrecy is an important means for the centralization of power. Precaritisation works most effectively when people at any time —despite past merits— know that they can be disposed of. The public secret execution is an effective way to state an example and spread the fear that will keep people on their toes.

Secondly, what do numbers do? They make it possible to standardize, measure, assess and compare. They allow to categorize and make the individual case concerning people's performance. They are taken as the basis for important decisions about people's lives. Numbers are powerful and deeply political. As numbers "have come to seem preinterpretive or even

somehow noninterpretive at the same time that they have become the bedrock of systematic knowledge",[7] they appear to be non-refutable and transparent quantities. They are generated to measure people's performance in an objective way. Thus, when used to express key performance indicators, no one has to bother about raising questions about the situational or contextual conditions such as history, experience, material resources, teaching loads and access to resources which people had available for performing their activities. Numbers then are allowed to operate as a key element of modern power techniques, steering behaviour effectively and getting deep into our bodies and minds as reifications of the qualities of subjects: "I am not a top-10 researcher", "I only raise 1 million per year", "We have to improve our university's position in the ranking". Confrontation with the numbers creates fear or satisfaction. The whip of the tyrant has been replaced by the numbers which make people know that they can and should do better; a negative discrepancy is always needed between the institution's expectations and people's actual performance. If more dimensions are needed in the grading scale—apart from teaching evaluations, research publications, and external funding—more variables can be added to measure people's personal style, collaborative abilities or assessments concerning the future expectations. The effect is the individualisation of failure and a centralization of power in the hands of leaders and administrators.

Thirdly, what does the centralization of power imply? It monopolizes the right to tell stories because there is no need to hear the other person's point of view. The people in power in other words gain the exclusive right to make such stories. It leaves the academic body without any effective guard from endless criticism and personal attacks; at the same time that it renders people manageable, and prone to "development". In other conditions, it would not be possible to have managers address academics in such way. It is an effect that neoliberal discursive practices have created: a much higher degree of interdependence of the individual academics on the managers. Academics have been handed over to managers and their idiosyncratic peculiarities. What produces such conditions? In the next sections we conceptualize an answer through the notions precarious management that produces affective subjectivation.

Precarious Management

We have chosen the term precarious management because it is productively ambiguous and paradoxical. It denotes two parallel processes: first the systematic inscription of precarity into the government and management of academia; second, the management of precarity where leaders and managers become the embodied father/mother figures of pastoral power.[8]

Foucault argued that the crisis of liberalism gave birth to neoliberalism. Within this order of reason homo oeconomicus—a man with a constant concern for economics and capital—appears as an archetypical subject. Neoliberalism is not new and has been actualized in slightly different ways through time and place. Wendy Brown analyses the current neoliberal mentality as a rationality that governs the making of people: "homo oeconomicus is made, not born, and operates in a context replete with risk, contingency, and potentially violent changes, from burst bubbles and capital or currency meltdowns to wholesale industry dissolution".[9] Contemporary financial capitalism generates subjects who always are concerned with their exchange rate, profit and value. With the term "human capitals" —as a substitute of human beings— Brown points to the convergence of the changes in the steering of various institutions to maximize profit from every single human dimension. Institutions of education and people in them do not escape this trend.

This reduction of the human condition to human capital connects to what Butler[10] calls precarious life. Her argument is that this condition is affecting a change in psychic reality, which is described as a heightened sense of potential expendability and disposability of the individual subject.[11] This is closely linked to neoliberalism's individualization of responsibility, competitions and the differential and variable grading scale by which lives are valued as more or less worth (living). Social isolation, heightened anxiety and the constant feeling of moral failure to comply with the norms and standards defined by the invisible and disembodied masters, because power is—as it has always been—not located anywhere but rather everywhere.

In academia, precaritisation lies precisely in concrete governing mechanisms and management technologies. In organisation theory, this is known as the post-bureaucracy.[12] Its selling point is to turn the classic bureaucracies into market-driven and service-oriented forms. Hence the post-bureaucracy is characterised by less formalisation, more decentralisation, flexibility, enterprise, innovation, and growth. At the same time, it also builds narratives of personal development, self-realisation and self-fulfilment in civil servants. It is thus sold upon a promise of helping release academics' striving for autonomy and creativity, by enhancing specific competence and skills such as self-presentation and self-management.

Precarious management thus works through the inscription of precarity into the structural conditions of academia. These structural conditions replace the bureaucracy's clear hierarchical structures, fixed wage and career systems and permanent tenure track systems with a much more market-controlled performance-based system, which also means that here-and-now market value replaces experience.[13] Structural indicators of a post-bureaucracy are:

1. **Structural redesign:** the turning of rectors, deans and department heads into strategic leaders instead of administrators, the use of temporary research positions at all levels, the disruption of career systems, permanent suspension of rights of employees, making research dependent on external funding instead of basic funding, and a centralization of power to the leaders in terms of making decisions on allocation of resources, recruitment, promotion, design of educational programs and so forth;
2. **Performance management:** the systematic introduction of practices of visualization on all levels: BFI-systems, quotation index (H-factor), external funding, evaluations of teaching and more or less arbitrary means for personality assessment;
3. **Self-development:** the systematic use of technologies of the self as an organizational means for framing the right kind of subject.

The result is a rather pervasive instantiation of precarity in the bits and pieces of academic life. While researchers in the Nordic countries and in state-funded universities elsewhere rarely had been exposed directly to

market needs, the situation has shifted dramatically towards an ever increasing focus on financialization, entrepreneurship and performativity of researchers. The situation here is, in one way, less terrible, and in another way, much more horrific. It depends on the individual academic's standing with deans, department heads and other leading administrators in the university. These "oracles" are set on the task of reading the trends and deciding more and more what the market needs and what the future will bring to make the academic enterprise a player in the flow of economics. But this imagined "market for academic services" is a fake. It is only a metaphor for the instantiation of a cruel interdependence where researchers and research are handed over to the system and those who manage it.

This submissive interdependence is intensified through practices of visualization whereby researchers and their "numbers" are exposed in league tables to public opinion as well as to the judgment of colleagues who are not only colleagues but also competitors.[14] Practices of visualisation are important means of power because they strip the researching bodies of their protective layers and expose them to maximum degrees of vulnerability. Through these operations the naked body of the researcher is handed over to the instituted masters and oracles, at the same time as the responsibility for this condition remains paradoxically with the researchers themselves.

Precarity is in this way inscribed as the governing condition that prescribes and regulates life of researchers in the university. It is inscribed into the speech and actions of every one of us, in material arrangements, governing structures, relationships, managerial structures and methods. It also becomes inscribed in the research subjects, in choices concerning what should or should not be researched, in the privileging of particular forms of research and in the administration and execution of educational programs.

Redemption Through Self-development

The last important indicator of the post-bureaucracy is the systematic use of technologies of the self.[15] This term encompasses a range of managerial technologies for managing precarity. They are important for the produc-

tion of an affective economy of neoliberalism.[16] Lauren Berlant's[17] notion of *cruel optimism* is useful here. It points to something, one desires, but which is actually an obstacle to one's flourishing. It is a relational dynamic whereby individuals remain attached to "compromised conditions of possibility" or "clusters of promises" embedded in desired object-ideas, even when they inhibit the conditions for flourishing and fulfilling such promises.[18]

Following Berlant, researching subjects have remained attached to great expectations, promises of security, intellectual life, upward mobility, as well as political and social equality despite evidence that in the neoliberal ethos universities cannot be counted on to provide opportunities for individuals to make their academic lives add up to something. Berlant talks about "optimism", whereas we use the notion of "happiness" (derived from a variety of fields related to the rise of psy-knowledges, the happiness industry and the therapeutic culture). "Happiness" is in this context a formal or structural affect, such that an "optimistic attachment is invested in one's own or the world's continuity, but might feel any number of ways",[19] including not optimistic at all. In other words, maintaining attachments that sustain the good, positive or happy life fantasy, no matter how injurious or cruel these attachments in the academia in the neoliberal ethos may be, allows academics to make it through day-to-day life when the day-to-day has become unliveable.

Simultaneously, precaritisation goes hand in hand with discourses of self-mastering, optimism, positive leadership, and strategic planning of the future that install the idea that it is possible to re-gain material or psychological well-fare, only if individuals capitalize themselves, by working with the right people, in the right topics, in the right alliances, to achieve the right milestones. In this sense, it is not surprising that the neoliberal ethos we refer to enhances the 'turn inwards' by enabling academic subjects to free themselves from the psychic and emotional chains so that they can take further control of themselves and their lives. All of this is done at least partly in terms of 'happiness and wellbeing'. The ethos works by maximising human capital by strengthening an enterprising, self-steering and self-responsible academic subjectivity who strives for a 'better, positive and happier life' through the application of scientific knowledge and professional skill.[20]

Technologies of the self in their various guises of identity performance management, self-reflection, coaching, developmental talks, etc. should be seen in this context. The organisational means for actualising neoliberal economies and conditions of precarity are thus sophisticated and cunning. They are disguised in the figure of the happiness, meditation or wellbeing coach, the therapist, of Buddha and other spiritual healers and helpers, and supervisors whose task is to lift and enrich academics so that they can realise their best potential— a good academic life. The principles and means of technologies of the self are very different: the coaching and (psy)sciences encompass systemic coaching, leadership coaching, narrative coaching etc.,[21] psycho-therapy, group-therapy, personality testing[22] reflexive and relational practices[23] as well as the wellbeing courses and happiness guidelines.

The use of these technologies of the self[24] disguises the realities of temporary positions instead of tenure, external funding instead of basic funding, and the exposure of researching body to anyone who might have an interest in them. These technologies of the self do not only disguise the real-political situation of researchers. They also serve to displace the responsibility from collective, historical, geographical and material conditions of research towards the individual researchers themselves. Guilt and shame are triggered psychic responses of researchers and are materialized in the confessional practices such as the annual employee development talks, biannual performance assessments, and other kinds of "development" techniques that hold academics accountable.

As a result, responsibility becomes more and more individualised. In terms of academic performance the requirements for individual responsibility have gone through the roof. Bronwyn Davies[25] claims that from a point of view of the relationship between society and individual, one of the big changes neoliberalism has brought about is transforming survival into an individual, instead of social, responsibility. Defined in individual terms and subjected to neoliberal redefinitions, the notion of survival focuses specifically on *economic* survival packed with a set of specific skills. These skills entail flexibility, responsiveness, and responsibility for self against the other. To meet the demand of individual responsibility for economic survival, the development of economic survival skills has become nothing less than a necessity, or rather, an *obligation*.[26] According

to Davies, the notion of vulnerability is closely tied to individual responsibility, and both are central to neoliberal subjectivity: workers are disposable and there is no obligation on the part of the 'social fabric' to take care of the disposed. Therefore, the neoliberal subject becomes both vulnerable and necessarily competitive. This survival is constructed not as moral survival but as economic one.[27] In these situations, the liminal position of the researcher is directly visible and it indicates a situation where the researcher can easily be moved from being included to become excluded.

Affective Subjectivation and Resistance

To summarize, affective subjectivation is the power effect on the subject of being governed through affects in neoliberal academia. The articulation of forms of management that generate instability and anxiety with technologies of self-development and personal growth keep subjects vulnerable in the midst of the ambivalence between the pressure for increased (economic) performance and the promise of individual, self-improvement. According to Brown, governance means moving from hierarchy to networks, from institution to process and to self-organisation.[28] In this article, it is argued that the neoliberal ethos and the turn inwards shape the ideal academic subjectivity as being not only autonomous and self-managing, but also as a disciplined being.

In the neoliberal ethos, precarious academic subjects are constituted under both oppression and resistance.[29] We emphasize however that precaritisation is not understood here only in its repressive, striating forms, but also in its productive moments.[30] The notion of precarity was not, as Jukka Peltokoski[31] has written, designed to describe the world itself, but to mobilise people to change it.[32] It was created for the construction of resistance.

One form of resistance that we have put forward is the disclosure of the "public secrets" that circulate among academics when the affective subjectivation and all the pain and violence it imposes on academics remain in silence. Writing the stories and making visible the conditions on which stories like these can happen is a way of disclosing power. However, we do not conceive of speaking out the pain as an individual form of therapy.

We see it more as a possibility and a right of re-appearance as a whole subject with an independent voice, intention and passion.[33]

One form of hope that clings to this idea is the fact that any form of power requires an active subject in order to work.[34] This is supported by the fact that freedom is the condition of the existence of any form of power.[35] Another form of hope is the recognition that the neoliberal ethos is always *challenged* and *contested* just as any other set of discursive practices. An important condition for this contestation is what Deleuze argues as the "outside thought"[36]: a gaze that discloses how the neoliberal ethos works and eats itself into the language and bodies of each and every one of us. This is an important precondition for unwrapping enslaving forces or finding ways of coping with them or subverting them from the inside.

Notes

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Part II

Seeing Inside-Out

8

Academic Wellbeing Under Rampant Managerialism: From Neoliberal to Critical Resilience

Dorothy Bottrell and Maree Keating

Introduction

Resilience has become a key word in government policies and everyday discourses, depicting people's capacities to manage adversities. It is a concept that now traverses diverse systems of organisation and regulation of human life and has become "a ubiquitous term for how we should live in this historical moment".[1] Others suggest that we have entered an "Age of Resilience".[2] However, the broad reach of resilience discourse has meant the concept is open to interpretation.[3] Recent critiques have analysed resilience in terms of its neoliberal utility.[4] Analysing a range of texts, from self-help guides to military training programs, national security strategies and OECD and IMF reports, Neocleous argues that resilience

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is a key political category and a state technology of neoliberal citizenship training, policing and "colonization of the political imagination".[5] He argues that it is an especially appealing concept because of its positive connotations.

Interpretations of resilience are embedded within ideologies and have significant social and political consequences in applications of policy and in the everyday practices of groups and organisations.[6] As Darder notes, ideologies are embedded in "'unexamined assumptions' often considered to be 'common sense'".[7] In this chapter we explore resilience discourses as practices and texts within a university context. Our aim is to explore the meanings and consequences of resilience when framed within an ideology of neoliberal utility, as a coordinating mechanism of academic work and wellbeing. In doing so we crack open and expose the institutional logic of resilience under regimes of punitive managerialism. We then argue for a critical re-framing of resilience that is consistent with the social justice aims of our academic work.

Drawing on Dorothy Smith's feminist sociology of 'everyday problematics'[8] and her account of the regulatory function of texts, intertextuality and ideological coordinating work,[9] we analyse several personal-political vignettes in their interrelationship with university management texts. Smith situates "texts" as central to the discourses that enable and are means of the enactment of power. As such, texts operate within institutional governance as integral to the complex of ruling relations. Resilience has recently entered the higher education policy lexicon, promulgated as a means or adjunct to staff wellbeing. It is important to interrogate how resilience works in academic governance and subjectification practices, particularly in the context of intensified workloads and managerialism. We offer our stories here, noting the value of personal (that is, political) narratives to shed light on "deeply embedded aspects of organisational life".[10]

We argue that conditions for 'nihilistic resilience' are created through a lock-step, 'coordinated' relation between university policy texts, management narratives and the removal of communication platforms necessary for collective analysis and action. Despite this, many academics do push back by refusing to surrender the notion that they can change their everyday worlds, or the practices and beliefs that accompany that notion.

Such refusals indicate the possibilities for a more critical framing of resilience, which allows for resistance and self-respect.

Coordinating Concepts of Resilience

Human resilience is broadly defined in the literature as positive adaptation despite adversity,[11] although this broad field has accumulated a plethora of specific meanings within varied empirical contexts, disciplinary approaches and methodological standpoints. Originating within American health sciences including psychiatry, psychology and medicine, the concept of resilience has variously referred to the capacity of people to recover from trauma, to cope with high levels of stress or to demonstrate competence, coping and wellbeing despite continuous or cumulative adversity. The early research on individual traits to explain people's wellbeing despite the effects of significant stressors has been critiqued as socially decontextualized and depoliticised. There is now widespread recognition of multiple processes and adaptive forms of resilience[12] and their formation in cultural contexts.[13] Social-ecological understandings[14] have largely replaced individualised explanations of human resilience and are important in the ecosystem resilience literature. This is an important re-framing which provides theoretical understandings that are particularly relevant to analysing resilience amongst academics in universities. Previous analysis of how human beings and ecosystems are interrelated within texts on climate change, sustainability, disaster management and security has revealed different ontologies, normative assumptions and hierarchically distributed agency and power that delimit and open possibilities for change in social order.[15]

Analyses of resilience discourses highlight the historical and theoretical nexus of resilience with other key concepts such as health and wellbeing, risk, insecurity, vulnerability, responsibility, resistance, coping and adaptability in the production of commonsense understandings. Landmark research in the 1960s and 1970s[16] shaped the field of human resilience and reflected the ascendency of health and healthy lifestyle in political discourse and social policy and effected a disruption to the dominance of research on pathologies.[17] At this time there was strong support for social

justice orientations coming from the leadership of the American Psychological Association and the Black Psychology movement.[18] Similarly, the American Orthopsychiatric Association President, Fritz Redl denounced the claims to "mental health" research by a pathology-focused field as "*terminological fraud*"[19] and challenged his colleagues to shift problematisation of people to the social conditions that supported anything but wellbeing. While these critical approaches still strongly resonate through human resilience studies, in the political milieu of neoliberalism, the idea of enhancing human resilience by intervening in adverse social arrangements has largely been erased in policy work.

Growing political obsession with risk and securitisation has come to dominate resilience logic in neoliberalised institutions. Resilience has become a key "political category" and "ideological trope" as resilient communities, organisations and citizens are called upon to become strategic agents of risk management.[20] Disaster management policies focus on building resistance to natural and social threats by assembling leaders, organisations and assets and harnessing community spirit. In reportage of natural disasters, resilience stories focus on human adaptability and coping as survival against the odds. McGreavy reflects that in such discourses resilience is often positioned as "the ability to cope, no matter how dire the circumstances".[21] Resilient organisations are invoked in times of economic crisis. For example, the global financial crisis of 2008 prompted the establishment of business coalitions and think tanks to develop strategies to enhance adaptability in organisational operations and risk management. In everyday "commonsense" discourses, informed by media reportage, social media and popular culture, the dominant image of resilience is promulgated through narratives of everyday heroes 'bouncing back' to superior health after trauma or debilitating injury, or overcoming their 'backgrounds' to achieve great accomplishments and material success. Recent critiques have highlighted that individualised responsibility for our own wellbeing fits neatly with the desired neoliberal subject.[22] In the absence or residualisation of state social provision, the neoliberal subject autonomously mitigates risks and challenges, actively and continually augmenting an enterprising "can-do" self. As Darder argues,

> In the homogenizing script of neoliberal existence, bootstrap accountability returns as a central value of the 'good society'… Accordingly, a 'rugged individualism' is venerated, and social action, outside the marketplace or neoliberal dictates, is deemed either suspect or the product of the weak and whining.[23]

The "ideological trope of resilience" thus moves across personal, institutional, economic and political fields and is a mechanism of bootstrapping accumulation, "helping the poor become wealthy".[24]

Resilience of the can-do ideological type is also, we suggest, a perfect fit with the performativity culture of entrepreneurial universities. As academics perform to, and despite, excessive labour demands, our self-management is complicit in the normalisation of overwork as recognisable ways of being academics.[25] Saltmarsh and Randell-Moon have elucidated how institutional discourses of academic wellbeing constitute "policy fictions" of work-life balance and serve "as institutional technologies through which the risky humanity of the academic workforce is not only managed, but also appropriated into the productivity aims of the neoliberal 'enterprise university'".[26] This process requires the willingness of academics to buy into the competition required for career success. Giroux argues that such 'responsibilisation' of the workforce is engendered through measures which depoliticise people, saying:

> Austerity measures purposely accentuate the shark cage relations emphasized by the economic Darwinism of neoliberalism and, in doing so, promote a world of competitive, hyper-individualism in which asking for help or receiving it is viewed as a pathology.[27]

We suggest that in the neoliberal university, making ourselves resilient is a necessary underpinning of wellbeing. This is because managerial "ideas of social responsibility and care have increasingly conformed to neoliberal principles, modes of operation, along with marketised delivery".[28] However, the ideological project of resilience may elicit very different subject positions and praxis. Evans and Reid argue that neoliberalism's moral agenda and ideological project articulates a nihilistic resilience. Operating

within security discourses, permanent insecurity and ubiquitous danger, human subjects must recognise vulnerability as ontology. They argue that:

> To increase its resilience…, the subject must disavow any belief in the possibility to secure itself and accept, instead, an understanding of life as a permanent process of continual adaptation to threats and dangers which are said to be outside its control.[29]

Permanently engaged in the "struggle to accommodate itself to the world", the nihilist resilient subject is thus "not a subject which can conceive of changing the world, its structure and conditions of possibility".[30] In seeking to resist such a response to shark cage relations, we join with others in arguing that academics must consider "how we might come to know and do resilience differently".[31]

Texts for Managing and Co-ordinating Resilience

Our interest in exploring what resilience means in university contexts began with our shared experience of intensive managerialism and a 'transformational' agenda. Observing detrimental impacts on our own and colleagues' wellbeing foregrounds the *necessity* of resilience and brings into question the university's stated concern for staff wellbeing. Health and wellbeing are now situated as twin elements of "core business" and health promotion in universities has largely replaced "risk reduction".[32]

While documents in the public domain may not capture all aspects of any one university's work in this area, they do allow us to identify key framings of resilience at this top-level.[33] In Smith's terms, we can examine the institutional order/ing through key "texts" and show how multiple texts work together within a hierarchy of ideas that comprise governance structures. Smith argues that texts such as policies, administrative and regulatory documentation and discourses are all "integral to the social organization of the institutional order" that is "independent of particular individuals".[34]

In our analysis of publicly available university texts we found that resilience is a theme taken up in universities' health strategies or situated alongside universities' wellbeing policies, in staff resources such as training programs, information and tip sheets. Resilience is rarely defined in any of the online documentation but through its placement alongside wellbeing, it is associated with institutional values such as respect, honesty, transparency, valuing cultural diversity and 'supporting our people'. We found some explicit references to resilience in policy documents. For example, Monash University's Health and Wellbeing policy states that "The University aims to create a safe, healthy and resilient work environment" and identifies several related procedures.[35] These include raising awareness and educating employees about mental health, promoting a positive and equitable environment that encourages physical activity, and the provision of visible support from management. Similar procedures are common to wellbeing policies and health, mental health and wellbeing strategies, with 25 universities signed up to the Australian Health Promoting Universities Network.[36] This Network initiative aims to embed health across all university activities, creating an environment that will support the "flourishing" of staff and students. It aims for graduates to be "resilient" and therefore better contribute to their communities and society.[37]

Online staff resources often include resilience training programs sometimes specifically related to change programs. It is now also common practice for universities to provide referral to professional counselling services as an everyday form of support, as they do for students. These services and messages about the importance of strengthening one's resilience are included in the raft of official documents curated by management during restructures.

University texts on resilience, health and wellbeing acknowledge the importance of workplace culture and management and espouse commitments to collegial processes. However, in the main they are compliance-focused, designed to meet minimal requirements of occupational health and safety legislation and to articulate the business case for improved employee productivity and institutional performance. The health promotion network strategy has a significant focus on the workplace setting and the settings-based approach recognises that organisa-

tional, administrative or change in management, built environment and policies may be necessary alongside efforts to promote people's healthy behaviour and mental health.[38] This is recognised in Deakin University's approach to "Preventing and managing Stress" which emphasises the value of resilience training (e.g. stress management, time management) as well as improving work conditions.[39]

University texts integrate notions of positive workplace relations and care for employees with "core business" and at the same time invisibilise issues of workload and the threats to mental health and wellbeing associated with punitive managerialism and constant restructuring. They openly acknowledge the need for staff resilience and compliance-oriented resources like those that predominate in wellbeing or work-life balance policies and provisions. However, as references to resilience mainly reside in online resources for staff within a wellbeing framework, the main function of resilience in university texts appears to be in activating academics' autonomy and capacities to "overcome" challenges in navigating the uncertainties of everyday work-life; to enhance our own career paths through emotional and psychological labour; and to contribute to the institutional bottom line through "can-do" entrepreneurialism.

In the following sections, we present some "everyday problematics" in academic work which sit alongside such co-ordinating texts on resilience during increasingly common change programs and restructures in the neoliberal university. Our recount here of a university change program is deliberatively subjective. It traces the shaping of academic work and identities through governing practices and institutional logics. Following Smith, we use them to shed light on "othered", unarticulated and silenced knowledges of institutional practices.

Resilience During Workplace Change in the Neoliberal University

In this section we reflect on stories collected from a group of academics in one university. All were affected by top down organisational restructuring processes in which a series of changes were introduced over the

course of a year. These changes included (1) a college merger, in which two groups of colleagues from different disciplines were asked to debate and agree on changes to the model for measuring and recognising academic outputs and workloads; (2) new administrator positions for the newly merged college, created to undertake activities previously considered to be part of academic work; (3) a program of course cuts and academic redundancies accompanying the creation of a separate new college; and (4) a restructure of academic research so that it was separately accounted for outside the college structure.

In the accounts below, *resilience* is positioned as both the foundation of individual survival and the outcome of individual and collective behaviours that support staff wellbeing. The stories and the university have been fictionalised to protect our anonymous informants (whose accounts are given in italics).

Collegial Debate as a 'risk to staff wellbeing'

The Enterprise Agreement stipulated that changes to the Academic Workload Model could be brought about through a collegial process. Staff were presented with a model developed by the deans of the merging colleges during formal staff meetings. In additional separate meetings however, the collegium, comprised of academics from the two disciplines, debated the merits of several alternative models designed by staff.

During the process it became clear that, although several models were put forward by the collegium, the only model deemed to be 'robust' enough for discussion was the one developed by the deans of the two colleges. Discussion of that model was allowed was via an online site, where serious efforts were made by academics to raise practical, ethical and other concerns with the model and with the discussion process itself. These were each dismissed with phrases in the order of "thank you for sharing" and "we will take that on advisement".

Face to face staff meetings ceased altogether after staff voted in favour of a new meeting agenda which would allow them to air concerns about the process for arriving at an agreed model. Several things happened immediately and soon after this event, in which 'staff wellbeing' and

'potential breaches of the staff code of conduct' were used to justify the removal of formal avenues for raising critiques of the process.

A notice was sent to all staff directly after the meeting saying that email usage would henceforth be monitored and moderated. The notice reminded staff that the 'Staff Code of Conduct' set out the expected behaviours of staff and included a link to that document. According to the senior administrators who authored the email, some academic staff had claimed to experience distress caused by exposure to dissenting views in meetings and email correspondence. The expression of these, and continuing debate which questioned the management proposal were characterised as generating conflict and constituting a form of bullying.

In order to protect these staff from unwanted exposure to fora in which questions may have been posed and evidence underlying the proposed workload model may be debated, the senior administrators cancelled all future face to face staff meetings. Group email correspondence in the college was vetted by an anonymous 'moderator' in order to protect the 'wellbeing' of staff. It was unclear whose wellbeing was at risk, or how exposure to debate and disagreement constituted a risk in itself. Any member of staff who expressed a concern about the erosion of workplace rights or contravention of the operating industrial agreement was ignored or silenced. Despite numerous requests no explanation was provided to staff about the parameters for allowable debate. Instead, correspondence was 'moderated' out of circulation if it came from particular staff members. Eventually almost all group correspondence from these staff on any matter was 'disappeared' by the college email moderator, without explanation.

'Voluntary' Departures, Hanging in there and 'Counselling' for survivors

After several visits to the Fair Work Commission[40] throughout late 2016 and early 2017, and despite unified resistance from the majority of the college academics, two weeks prior to the start of semester a college change plan announced the immediate cancellation of seven courses. Arguments given by management were incoherent overall, although all the staff most affected by the changes were vocal members of the union.

After the course cancellations were revealed to affected staff, an email was sent out inviting staff to apply for voluntary redundancies or compete with colleagues for the few remaining positions. As a result of this process, a large number of vocal staff members whose courses had all been cut, saw the writing on the wall and with great reluctance took the generous voluntary packages on offer.

Remaining academics were encouraged to apply for options such as early retirement or reduced time fraction. But the main alternatives put forward were to apply for a teaching focused academic position or to apply for a 'voluntary' redundancy. Those who opted to stay in their existing college position received no clarification about whether that position would exist after 'the transformation'.

During this time the College appointed a professional counsellor and staff were regularly reminded that this service was available if any staff who were experiencing concerns or distress during the period of workplace change. This left a more exposed group of dissenters behind, as favours were subsequently handed out to 'survivors' who had maintained a pro-management position during the consultation.

So much was going on it had been almost impossible to find time to contribute to the process. And yet our futures depended on it and so I was working every weekend to keep up with the relentless teaching, marking, publishing schedule as well as all the extra meetings. About one hundred of our colleagues were gone and by the end of the farewells, we were exhausted. Fear, anxiety, powerlessness and anger had alternately raged and slumped throughout a long eighteen-month process. Then it all gave way to just mourning the untimely loss of college friends with outstanding track records in teaching as well as research.

So, I was exhausted. We all were. At the end of crackdowns on communication, clandestine resistance meetings, long formal emails with copious change documentation, unresolved workload and mounting threats, a new dean arrived to herald in yet another round of 'consultations' and strategic 'transformations'. This time the centre of gravity had shifted to an entirely new project – applications were invited for staff to join a new teaching-oriented college in which research and supervision time for academics would be stripped right back. Management had achieved the 'workload efficiencies' they wanted by stealth. And college academics were so scared of losing their jobs, many raced to apply anyway.

Facing Down Erasure

One college staff member describes the following incident that occurred at a staff meeting called shortly after the 'voluntary' departure of a large number of trusted colleagues, many of whom had been union members and branch committee members.

After the redundancies the rest of us received multiple emails from the Chancellor, the Provost and the Vice-Chancellor congratulating themselves about 'the university's success' in climbing in international research rankings and other important ladders. No mention was made of those discarded academics who had actually done the work to get us there. But we were told by the senior leadership that this was an exciting time 'for the university'. Academics were not feeling excited, but then perhaps we were no longer part of 'the university' as they saw it.

So imagine – it's the first faculty meeting since our numbers have been dramatically culled. Most of us were grieving over the whole horrible experience, unsure of our jobs and anxious about the regime ahead. It was clear that no more debate would be tolerated, just announcements now.

The dean kicked off by lightheartedly apologising for not knowing the words of our 'Acknowledgment of Country', a ritual of respect given to Aboriginal people past and present at all university gatherings. He then acknowledged that some of us might be feeling uncertain 'after all that had happened'. He urged us all to move on, reflecting that, now that the 'swamp' had been 'cleaned', he looked forward to 'enlisting a coalition of the willing to move forward'.

We were assigned to groups to come up with 'concrete strategies' to 'feed into' college plans. Twelve thematic groups each held four meetings, documenting the confused (with little relevant information available) discussions as 'outcomes'. Formal enterprise bargaining had not started, so we were not sure why we were talking about workloads. Or why we were discussing 'resources' when we had no control of budgets. What could we say about course offerings when courses are slashed regardless of our arguments for their retention?

But meanwhile the real business had been taking place out of our view. Hot on the heels of the new college, a new research system would now exclusively recruit all of the university's researchers. In one click of a send button,

all our workload agreements on research were redundant. For academics in our college, the last remaining legs were finally knocked out from under our collectively agreed conditions. The dean of course got promoted.

Summing up the process, another colleague put it this way:

The university wellbeing and anti-bullying policies did not help any of us. Actually, they were used against staff who objected. Our legal industrial instrument, our union and the Fair Work Commission couldn't protect us from managerial excesses. And, well, a highly paid management consultant is not the right person to counsel staff about how they ought to survive and thrive under this situation.

Coordinating Texts of Resilience

Academic resilience can be seen as specific practice coordinated through the intertextuality between strategy and policy, workplace change documents, training and other resources and everyday workplace practices. The above vignettes exemplify the kinds of brutal managerialism that have been documented within toxic universities.[41] Intimidation of staff occurs through doublespeak about protection of staff wellbeing, availability of counselling and voluntary options, a raft of silencing and diversionary tactics, a system of clear rewards and punishments around compliance, as well as public displays of disrespect and warlike imagery as evident in the dean's talk.

Smith argues that governance is "done" in and through texts as concepts, symbols and practices that translate people's actual lived experience into abstract and standardized depictions of bodies, categories, and causal linkages taken out of the local and particularized context into generalised texts. The vignettes show the necessity of individualised resilience and responsibilisation of academics for our own wellbeing, arising from political and social processes which simultaneously naturalise managerial power whilst privileging and invisibilising institutional efforts to maintain and extend managerial reach. The result is a "deep disjuncture" between "everyday" lives of academics and the ideological pronouncements of the dominant texts.[42]

In textual representations the key process of abstracting lived realities produces a disjuncture between lived and official accounts of what is most significant and what is at stake, as well as the possibilities for change. In our accounts of governing texts, 'staff wellbeing' was given as the reason for silencing dissenting voices in face to face and email fora. It appeared that for some staff, even receiving innocuous emails from 'dissenting' staff members could be positioned as a threat to their wellbeing. Senior administrators utilised vague references to codes of conduct and staff wellbeing policies as a premise to silence representations outside those officially shaped and sanctioned.

Deconstructing the co-ordinating role of texts, Smith distinguishes acting from having agency within the institutional order. Where the institutional order subjugates and punishes, people's fear, intimidation and sense of powerlessness can lead them to conform to required disciplinary practices. However due to hierarchical control, organising texts in institutions may "deny agency to people who do not share the interests and experiences it embeds".[43] Staff willingness to actively communicate their support for new practice narratives carries great weight under these conditions. It is deemed as indicative of staff 'resilience' in the new ideological environment. Staff who demonstrate such 'resilience' are the only ones whose contributions are allowed to flourish and have their voices heard throughout the halls of the academe.

Just as non-compliant staff are declared redundant, re-located away from peer networks or starved of support for career progression, the 'resilient' and 'flexible' staff are promoted and rewarded for their capacity to adapt to change. The resulting reorganisations are said to arise out of a neutral selection process, favouring the most resilient, flexible and adaptable staff. Such qualities are attached to publicly declarative behaviours through which staff indicate willingness to 'do something' to actively further the official change agenda by positioning themselves as change 'agents', 'leaders' or 'advocates' in the university.

Through the presentation of our subjective standpoints we have made visible the disjunctures or *cracks* in managerial coordination of our work. In the final section we discuss some strategies that can and do further

alternatives to the nihilistic resilience favoured by institutional managerialists.

Critical Resilience: Recovery and Sustained Political Purposes

Smith's feminist sociology connects everyday work practices and the extended social relations of production, showing how practices, knowledge making and processes of governance are embedded in ruling relations. Her attention to "everyday problematics" enabled her to foreground women's experience as "outside" the patriarchal representations of the "apparently neutral and impersonal rationality of the ruling apparatus".[44] She argued that women's "standpoint" is necessary in order to understand how everyday actualities are shaped and organised by ruling relations. As feminist academics, Smith's work has been exceptionally valuable in providing us with tools for analysing our everyday experiences and their disjuncture with managerial texts in the neoliberal university.

Cracking open the disjuncture between managerialist texts and the lived experience of academics allows a space in which we can consider academic actions and responses which fall outside the co-ordinated, neoliberal logic. This may involve refusals of certain aspects of the institutional texts, or subversive compliance, along with deliberative pursuit of invisibilised aspects of academic work that contribute to a subjective sense of wellbeing.

We argue that such actions operate as alternative "texts" which are the basis of more critical approaches to resilience in higher education. Zautra et al. propose two overarching definitions of resilience focused on health and wellbeing: as "recovery from adversity" and "sustainability of purpose".[45] We find these concepts pertinent to our experience and understand them to be reciprocally influential. Sustainability of purpose refers to one's capacity to maintain connections and pursue commitments despite the challenging or traumatic environment that has produced the need for recovery. These concepts connect with relational processes of resilience,

including trust, culture and leadership and the melding of personal hopes with social purposes[46]; and, we want to add, personal-political purposes.

We highlight here three ways we enacted a critical resilience praxis. All involve collective purposes and all provided mutual support. We have both had the good fortune of working in collegial teaching, research and supervisory teams involving respect and inclusivity. Such academic teams have shared principles and a purpose which challenges and seeks to transform "undemocratic relationships, institutional structures, and material conditions that perpetuate domination and reproduce material inequalities and social exclusions".[47] In such groups we were able to maintain focus on our research, supervision and teaching work during turbulent workplace change.

Secondly, we belonged to a feminist research network that provided a safe space in which to express our fears and confusion, build connections across the university and discover information about the broader change plans afoot. The network continued a program of holding seminars, facilitating small research grants, celebrating each other's successes, mentoring other women and pressing the hierarchy for more action on gender equity. The network mounted solid arguments against proposed changes which would affect women staff and students in disproportionate ways and offered space for sustaining purposes and recovery, including helping many to manage survivor guilt after the restructure.

Thirdly, we were active in our union. We were sustained through regular sharing, planning and strategising for the collective good, and by the constant messages of support and solidarity we received from members across the branch.

Subjective accounts documented in this chapter highlight how wellbeing and anti-bullying policies can be used to silence and manage dissent and how provisions for staff 'feedback' and 'counselling' during workplace change can be designed to work against staff wellbeing. Such accounts demonstrate how managerial resilience texts in the neoliberal university erase the contributions of individual academics and devalue collegial processes, whilst attributing the 'success' of the university to senior administrators. These institutional practices necessitate a 'nihilistic resilience' in the daily lives of academic staff, with direct consequences to personal wellbeing on a broader level, including a reduced capacity to resist.[48] In articulating these processes, alongside the alternatives to the

neoliberal logic of 'nihilistic resilience' which we observed and engaged in, we highlight our continuing hopes for more critical forms of academic resilience, ones which still might flourish amongst academics in the cracks, out of a shared desire for collectivity, collegiality and a common pursuit of social justice ideals.

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9

Creative Frictions in the Neoliberal University: *Courting Blakness* at The University of Queensland

Fiona Foley, Fiona Nicoll, Zala Volcic, and Dominic O'Donnell

Introduction

Recent protests in Africa, the UK, Australia and North America have focused on commissioned sculptures of historical figures deeply associated with institutions and processes of slavery and colonialism. Statues of African colonizer Cecil Rhodes have been removed in Cape Town and

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become the object of anti-racist protests at Oxford University. Removal of the statue of Confederacy general, Robert E Lee, catalysed anti-racist and white supremacist protesters. The rise of the 'black lives matter' movement against police and civilian shootings of unarmed African-Americans and the killing of an anti-racist protestor at Charlottesville in 2017 suggest that debates around such monuments cannot be dismissed as merely symbolic. Controversies over representations and embodiments of racial[1] domination are indicative of tensions pervading institutions at every level, from the grand stage of national politics of to the ground level of policing and surveilling individuals belonging to specific populations.

To understand these controversies, it is necessary to understand what it means to be white in contexts where colonization has conferred a sense of ownership through a gamut of institutions, from the family and the workplace to the law courts, cultural institutions, and the nation itself. Indigenous critical theorist, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, describes this as 'the white possessive' and she conveys how national space is experienced by those at whose expense it exists:

> For Indigenous people, white possession is not unmarked, unnamed or invisible; it is hypervisible. In our quotidian encounters, whether it is on the streets of Otago or Sydney, in the tourist shops in Vancouver or Waipahu, or sitting in a restaurant in New York, we experience ontologically the effects of white possession. These cities signify with every building and every street that the land is now possessed by others; signs of white possession are embedded everywhere in the landscape. The omnipresence of Indigenous sovereignties exists here too, but it is disavowed through the materiality of these significations, which are perceived as evidence of ownership by those who have taken possession. This is territory that has been marked by and through violence and race. Racism is thus inextricably tied to the theft and appropriation of Indigenous lands in the first world. In fact, its existence in the United States, Canada, Australia, Hawai'i, and New Zealand was dependent on this happening.[2]

Moreton-Robinson's argument prompts us to reflect on the unique place of the university within territorial spaces of white possession. Before proceeding, it is also timely to pause on a question posed by Rauna Kuokkanen about universities in the process of decolonization:

"If epistemic ignorance – the arrogant and indifferent not-knowing in the academy – results in a situation in which indigenous people cannot speak in or are not heard by the academy, what would an alternative discourse look and sound like?"[3]

In September 2014, works by eight Aboriginal artists, Ryan Presley, r e a, Megan Cope, Christian Thompson, Michael Cook, Archie Moore, Natalie Harkin and Karla Dickens were brought into the heart of The University of Queensland's Great Court. The project's title, *Courting Blakness: Recalibrating Knowledge in the Sandstone University*, was deliberately rich in meaning. The concept of 'courting' referred to its location in the Great Court as well as the notion of aesthetic seduction, with reference to 'blakness' as a sovereign capacity to self-define Indigeneity beyond racial binaries of black and white. The project of 'recalibrating knowledge' spoke to an ambition appropriate to a global research university and 'sandstone' referenced the beautiful materiality of the Great Court, the Aboriginal country from which it was quarried, as well as a term that has long been used to distinguish, older and prestigious, research-intensive universities from their more recent counterparts in Australia.

The exhibition was opened by The Hon. Linda Burney MP, then New South Wales opposition leader and, subsequently, the first Indigenous woman to be elected to the Federal House of Representatives. The opening included performances and screenings of multimedia artworks directly onto carvings of Aboriginal people on the interior sandstone wall of the Law Faculty.[4] A unique inter-disciplinary national symposium brought together 32 artists, curators and academics from UQ and across Australia. This public event attracted audiences working within education and cultural industries in Queensland and beyond.

Courting Blakness reached over 800 students across fourteen different courses through disciplinary specific frameworks of discussion and assessment tasks. Disciplines included Indigenous studies, psychology, linguistics, art history and curatorial studies, journalism, anthropology, Australian studies, cultural and media studies, architecture, gender studies, political science and digital humanities.[5] Over 1000 hours were given to the project by interns and volunteers who assisted with the symposium and staffed a welcome desk in the Great Court during the exhibition, to encourage dialogue about issues raised by the works. The *Courting*

Blakness website reached over 3031 unique users and was a valuable teaching, learning and research resource for the exhibition. It is now a unique digital archive for future research on public art and universities.[6]

Courting Blakness was an unsolicited project, emerging from collaborations between Fiona Foley, individual UQ academics, government and non-government sponsors, volunteers and art institutions, and it attracted support at all levels of the university hierarchy. However, the project caused significant frictions along lines that did not always follow a simple divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors. More specifically, it highlighted fundamental contradictions that animate the neo-liberal university as a branded actor in international markets. These were evident in a series of competing values through which the project attempted to steer a course: between social justice and colonial state control; between collective service and individual achievement in a highly competitive research environment; between visions of education as a private and a public good; and between more or less contained and containing visions of the socially transformative potential of Indigenous art.

This chapter reflects on the achievements and limitations of *Courting Blakness* from four related perspectives: Fiona Foley, the curator; Fiona Nicoll, the project manager and academic participant; Zala Volcic, an academic who engaged the project with her transnational research expertise in public art, nationalism and branding; and Dominic O'Donnell, a student volunteer and independent media producer whose work provided an online archive of the temporary exhibition.

Storytelling[7] is a powerful way to acknowledge our embeddedness within colonial logics that transcend our individual agencies and link together experiences from different structural positions within a given project or event. What follows presents four interwoven stories by participants in a project that sought to bring Indigenous knowledge from outside the university into its heart through contemporary artworks that spoke directly to the iconography of white possession carved into its architecture.

The critiques that follow are not aimed at a specific university, even though a specific university was the site of this project. Rather our stories aim to reveal deeper structural relations of racial power in Australia that would likely play out in any university where Indigenous people are

approached as one minority within a multicultural society and their educational needs addressed, primarily, through a deficit lens.[8] The common and intersecting themes in our stories, related by individuals with different roles within the project, suggest that their value lies beyond the personal and associated implications of bias or anecdotal evidence that are often used to discredit anti-racist and feminist critiques. To underline this point, we present our stories through the lens of the roles we occupied throughout the project. Each contribution to this story could be visualised as a brick contributing to the project of building a new university, one that is grounded on an uncompromising determination to see social justice delivered instead of 'non-performative' gestures of 'commitment'.[9] We share them as part of the work of eroding white possession as a non-negotiable prerogative erected against Indigenous sovereignties in Australia and other settler-colonial nations.

A Prehistory of *Courting Blakness*

The first part of this story conveys the creative sparks that brought people together in a project that was to become much more than the sum of our individual parts.

The Project Manager and Academic

My embodied understanding of the everyday ground of white possession was first engaged by Fiona Foley's artistic intervention at the heart of 'my city' of Melbourne. In 1997, several years before I moved to work at The University of Queensland, I was disoriented by a public sculpture installation titled *Law of the Land*.[10] Stone tablets were erected in front of and echoing the columns of the Melbourne Town Hall, inscribed with words describing the items traded for lands by John Batman. Batman was the white settler-colonist most closely associated with the 'foundation' of the city in which I was born, educated and raised. Through speakers placed in the vicinity, pedestrians heard the sounds of birds and words spoken in Wurundjeri and other languages in use during the time of Batman's

'treaty', (which was subsequently ruled illegitimate by the colony's governor). Prior to encountering this installation, I had been a critic of reconciliation and outspoken in my support for a treaty to recognize Indigenous sovereignties. But I had never questioned my presence in and entitlement to country pre-possessed by Koori people in and around Melbourne. Fiona's strategically placed public artwork had the power to transform my experience of space and time in a phenomenological sense, something that Indigenous art confined in art and other cultural institutions was unable to do. It revealed the racial force of state sovereignty lying beneath the veneer of everyday life in Australian institutions.

After discovering that Fiona was living and working in Brisbane I issued a standing invitation to speak about her public art practice to my undergraduate students each year. Conversations sparked by Fiona's work were not always comfortable ones and I was often nervous during her presentations; trans-generational expressions of racism as well as more recent 'ironic' or 'postmodern' variants (think Chris Lilley's 'yellowface' and 'blackface' performances) would often come to the surface in the questions that students asked. Why they were being made to feel responsible for historical atrocities in which they had played no role as individuals? Why couldn't Indigenous people 'move on' as members of a tolerant, multicultural nation where everyone has a 'fair go'? The patience and detail in Fiona's responses to these questions impressed me, as well as her willingness to speak to her own family history and individual experience to help students understand the themes of her art.

Another catalyst for my involvement in *Courting Blakness* was Aboriginal themes depicted on friezes that adorn the Great Court's interior and exterior walls commissioned by architect, Jack Hennessey.[11] Stone carvings depict scenes from pre-colonial life; ceremony, hunting, food preparation. Other scenes include Indigenous people standing on the sidelines as scenes of modern agriculture and industry unfold. We also witness a scene of Captain Cook's proclamation of British sovereignty.[12] Read together, these friezes tell a story of Aboriginal culture being displaced through 'scientific' anthropological curation ahead of the inevitable march of European civilization.[13]

The historical framing of white invasion through tropes of peaceful 'discovery' and the celebration of white possession through a grand

narrative of civilizational progress was at odds with my experience of working and living in Queensland. It was my privilege to work and protest alongside some of the most influential intellectuals, writers, orators and broadcasters of Indigenous Australia whose politics were forged during the era of Black Power[14] and the repressive state policing of the subsequent Bjelke Peterson years. The issues of land dispossession and racism they faced down in the 1970s had not disappeared in the twenty first century. In my first year at the university there was a horrific death in police custody on Palm Island where a police officer was alleged to have exercised excessive force, constraining a man arrested to the point of death.[15]

As a university employee, I found it difficult to reconcile these realities of ongoing racism with the Great Court's use in marketing material for the university; its heritage-listed architecture used to brand it as a subtropical version of Cambridge, replete with an annual footrace through the cloisters based on a scene from the film *Chariots of Fire* (1981). I became possessed by a driving ambition to complicate the Great Court's story of Queensland and to expose its racial foundations in anachronistic views of Aboriginal people as relegated to the past.

The Curator

I have been actively involved in several universities during my career as a public artist. I understand the value of education as breaking the cycle of poverty. Some of the problems encountered by Aboriginal participation in Australian universities include: outdated curriculums embedded in old lies of colonialism and patriarchal power, unfriendly spaces to engage new ideas, unpaid labor of Aboriginal participation on campus, a lack of Aboriginal lecturing staff and a fear of Aboriginal intellectuals.

My appointment as adjunct professor to The University of Queensland in 2011 was made by the Senate after several letters of support were submitted by academic staff. I actively brought new ideas to this space, using a platform of race and cross discipline inclusion. This is something I had done previously with *The Art of Politics/ The Politics of Art*[16] at Griffith University in 2003. I naively entered into these institutional spaces in

response to invitations, with each taking a toll on my wellbeing. Both projects followed a standard format, of artist inclusion either through a residency program or invitation to create work for a university environment, a two-day symposium, followed by a publication. Both projects took a long time to raise funds, which were dependent on external grants from the state.

When I was appointed as an adjunct professor on these two separate occasions in the initial stages I was full of enthusiasm. As an artist, I thought it would be an opportunity to have a different type of dialogue in Queensland, one not predicated on race divides. However, I was wrong. The behaviors of academics were initially foreign to me. I experienced all sorts of individual and structural hierarchies not working toward a common good for students as an outcome and my appointment was treated either with suspicion or largely negated by non-indigenous academics. My first adjunct appointment encapsulated a concerted 'passive resistance' from mainstream academics at Queensland College of Arts. This did not prepare me for institutional and academic resistance as the project for The University of Queensland gathered momentum and was realized in September 2014.

The Academic Colleague

Theodor Adorno argues that "The past will have been worked through only when the causes of what happened then have been eliminated. Only because the causes continue to exist does the captivating spell of the past remain to this day unbroken."[17] The resurgent nationalisms and ethnic cleansing that took place in the former Yugoslavia provided an object lesson not only in the political character of culture (and vice versa), but also in the burdens of history and the ways in which these can be used and abused. Art as a medium for public engagement was familiar to me. I came of age during a period of political turmoil in the Balkans and experienced the transformation of a regime, a nation, and a way of life. Public art had a huge role to play in these transformations, from the street art protesting both communism and imperialism, to the engaged forms of theater, music, and performance art that played a game of brinksmanship with the ruling political elites.

My research interests expanded, when I moved to work in the Australian academy. When faced with Indigenous histories, genocides, and calls for justice, I noticed eerie similarities: denials of the traumatic past; unwillingness to deal with it, silences around these. There is a double-bind in these engagements: on the one hand, suppressed traumas structure the conditions of daily life; they underlie what passes for normality, making this normality possible. On the other hand, confrontation with these traumas is the only way to address the pathologies of what passes for normality but this requires a great "undoing." So, what is needed in both cases, is what Theodore Adorno describes as the dedicated labour of "working upon the past".

The Student Volunteer and Project Archivist

In the final semester of my media and cultural studies major I attended Michael Aird's exhibition titled *Captured: Early Brisbane photographers and their Aboriginal subjects*, at the Museum of Brisbane to learn more about non-Indigenous photo-documentation of Indigenous people in Australia. The show featured many photographs of Aborigines standing against elaborate backdrops, all taken in a Brisbane studio in the late 1860s. Aird called attention to the active role played by Indigenous people in these photographs.[18] This shifted the way I had previously thought about the power relations around these moments of documentation: they were, after all, moments of successful encounter and exchange, ultimately producing an important archive for descendants. A short while later, Dr. Nicoll put out a call for student volunteers for the *Courting Blakness* project. I expressed interest and became involved as a photographer and videographer for the project's exhibition.

Labors of Love

The Curator

I was asked to invite Aboriginal artists to create work specifically for the Great Court, including artists who work with moving image, with the

intent of having their work projected onto the sandstone façade. I was agreeable to these terms and set about thinking who would be curated into the exhibition. I decided on a total of eight artists from Queensland and interstate. I drew heavily upon two artists living in Brisbane, Archie Moore and Ryan Presley,[19] for public talks at Diversity Week and recorded interviews for the media which contributed resources to the *Courting Blakness* website.

A small team of UQ teaching staff working on the project set about to garner support from key academics in positions of power. As progressive thinkers who wanted to be a part of the symposia and contribute to the discussions and publication, they could see the vision that was *Courting Blakness*. They contributed much time and effort to the project's organization and embedding it in the curriculum.

Although there was proof of Aboriginal inclusion through my appointment as an adjunct professor there seemed to be an insidious expectation that the appointment lay inactive and unresponsive. It was apparently incumbent on me to produce an Indigenous perspective and to deliver a project of note for all UQ students. However, my freedom to grow a project was severely constrained initially by no budget being allocated to work with. I had to raise funds for the project as well as dedicate time to additional tasks such as 'talking up' the intended project through events like Diversity Week.

Courting Blakness was a labour of love that was never remunerated by The University of Queensland. For indigenous people involved in bringing Indigenous knowledge, universities are not conducive places to work but are psychologically challenging and in the long run damaging. It was only my sheer determination not to walk away from this project that it went ahead at all. Although one adopts a number of strategies to 'push back' there is only so much fighting for an idea one can undertake during three years of adversity.

The Academic Colleague

When Fiona Nicoll approached me to be a part of this project, I felt not only grateful but excited, challenged and engaged in many ways. To bring

to our students the works of Fiona Foley and the rest of the artists was crucial and powerful. Where else, I asked, if not at university, would our students be able to participate in the labour of "working upon the past"? I felt the familiar pull of political engagement and its vexed relationship with the more local politics of academic life.

The project launch at the UQ art museum assembled artists, diverse academics, and other supporters of the project for a whole day. It was a magical event for me. I remember the dynamism and intensity of the artists as they spoke. Everyone was linked by our belief that an honest engagement with the past is needed, and this was one way to engage it.[20] We all felt and understood that this project mattered.[21]

In spite of the enthusiasm for social justice that drove the project, unlearning the structure of normality in the university is both necessary and potentially traumatic. An admission of the atrocities whose suppressed memories run like fissures through the social body seems impossible for dominant political parties in Australia, who, in keeping with the rhetoric of the time, seek "sustainability": the process of sustaining an injury indefinitely, without treating it, healing it, or even, for the most part, acknowledging it. And herein lies the rub: it's not clear that there is enough commonality of interest to withstand an honest engagement with the past. And yet, there is no other way forward.

The Project Manager and Academic

Processes of commodification were evident in various attempts to reframe the *Courting Blakness* project, from being a gift of 'Indigenous epistemes'[22] to that of brand enhancement for the university. Fiona Foley's reputation was harnessed as an adornment to an institution seeking evidence of diversity. She was required to give guest lectures on her artistic practice to classrooms of undergraduate students but she was never engaged as an equal partner in addressing the university's challenge of recruiting and retaining Indigenous students.[23]

The project's implementation was further challenged by a deeply conservative political environment, at state and federal government levels.[24] Following the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Commission in 2004 and the Northern Territory 'Intervention' in 2007, the focus within many universities shifted to 'closing the achievement gap' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students within the mainstream system. This approach to Aboriginal education was sometimes in tension with the historically informed challenges to non-Indigenous truth claims that Fiona Foley's ambitious public art projects seek to expose.

The Student Volunteer and Archivist

A general ambivalence towards engagement with Indigenous issues characterised discussion in many of my undergraduate classes. My education—at an elite private school in Brisbane—had not fostered reflective engagement with relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The few times I spoke with peers about discussing Indigenous issues in class, the main concern they expressed was feeling unfamiliar with the issues. Some chose to remain silent out of fear of seeming uninformed or discriminatory. Others articulated concerns over speaking on issues that had not directly affected them. While students often hesitate to fully engage in discussions around race out of fear of being judged by educators, I surmise they are just as anxious of how their peers will judge them.

This ambivalence echoed throughout students' responses to *Courting Blakness* during the time I spent as a volunteer in the Great Court. Situated at the center of the University, this space functions as a major thoroughfare for students between classes. While many students passively encountered the exhibition, others actively inquired about the curated works. While I felt my labor (of answering these questions) was appreciated by most students, some appeared either uncomfortable, disinterested or confused once I explained it was an exhibition of Indigenous art. However, the fact that I was volunteering alongside other students who were passionate about the project and Indigenous issues meant that hostile or ambivalent responses were easier to cope with.

Managing Perceptions of Risks in the Neoliberal University

The previous section highlighted the university's commissioned art as a powerful means by which violent processes of white possession were translated culturally as a benign march of progress towards a 'commonwealth' in which Queensland played an important role. This disavowed the violent trauma through which the nation and the colony were originally constituted, a trauma perpetuated through everyday processes of 'white possession' in legal, political, cultural and educational institutions. *Courting Blakness* used art to challenge this semiotic regime[25] and to engage a political and epistemological transformation within the university.[26] This section explores details of some of the frictions that animated the project.

The Curator

For some reason, there was a disruption to the status quo through the appointment of an Aboriginal adjunct professor. Copious meetings were scheduled to navigate and mitigate all risk associated with eight artists presenting their work in the Great Court. Over the course of my appointment *Courting Blakness* was tinkered with, obstructed, censored, frowned upon and silently absented to, by some senior university staff and academics. At some point, as the project was nearing realization, a perceived threat which was not actualised was played out. A number of racially and politically motivated ideologies were employed to disrupt the entire project. Suffice to say I was never invited to the table.

I had no idea that one of the artists would draw the ire of one of the senior Indigenous executives. Or maybe it was a deliberate ruse to create tensions when there were none? Historically Aboriginal people did not have flags: they are a western construct explored by Archie Moore over several years. His work in *Courting Blakness* conceptualised 14 Aboriginal flags for 14 nations in Queensland, identified by an anthropologist in 1901 to dialogue with the current one designed by Harold Thomas in 1971 for all of Australia's Aboriginal sovereign nations.[27] One month out from *Courting Blakness* being realised, senior executives at UQ held meet-

ings without my involvement and made the decision that the artist, Archie Moore, could not fly four of his flags off the Forgan Smith building although notice had been given of his plans and approvals sought well before the works were completed. Although the artist had done nothing wrong, a significant part of his work was censored. The removal of these flags was a significant blow; one of these flags was the branding for the *Courting Blakness* project and by this stage was synonymous with it in the promotional literature, t-shirts and signage. I went in to bat for Archie Moore and suggested he do a silent protest with the four flags that did not fly in his site-specific installation when it was my turn to speak at the symposium.

This was only one of a number of interferences construed by the university. I never knew where and when the next attack would be mounted and for what reasons. A number of meetings involving senior executive and heads of schools were held and decisions were made without my knowledge. The logic for executive grievances was never presented to me face to face but through a handful of autocratic telephone calls. The point of these telephone calls is that there is no traceable record by the institution that they ever took place. I was told in one of those phone calls that I was not allowed to invite Aboriginal spokesperson, the then New South Wales Labor Deputy Leader, Linda Burney, to open the event. Rather, I had to invite Queensland's conservative white LNP minister for the arts instead. This was another crucial battle I had to engage with. In this phone call I stated that, if Linda Burney was not allowed to speak and open *Courting Blakness,* I would contact a journalist at *The Australian* newspaper to publicise my treatment.

Project Manager and Academic

I had hoped that the exhibition would be recognized as a gift of critique, not only to the hosting institution, but also to other Australian universities involved through the symposium and book. However, as the project gathered momentum, I was subjected to various attempts to direct my energies as a project manager to a task that I can only describe as 'controlling Fiona Foley.' Meetings were held behind closed doors to which we

were not invited. I was neither ready for this silent resistance nor sure how to best respond. The use of silence and secrecy to police the boundaries and potential of the project sharpened my appreciation of Fiona Foley's work on how hidden histories of race penetrate into the crevices of everyday life. I also sensed dangers of this silent treatment. While I knew that I had the moral support of many colleagues, I also realized that they would not risk their own careers to speak out in support of Fiona's vision. After some former supporters abandoned the project, I faced a personal and professional crisis. It required an act of faith to believe that these institutional frictions would ultimately be creative rather than destructive to everybody involved.

The Student Volunteer and Archivist

Courting Blakness initially made two contrasting truths visible for me. While racism was literally carved into the heart of the University, there were scores of students gathered in this central space, working together to foreground Indigenous issues in an increasingly neoliberal environment, marked by its penchant for competitive individualism. Despite the sense of community among volunteers, artists, and staff involved in *Courting Blakness*, I often felt anxious in talking with others about the project—or more precisely, about what the project was responding to. Given that the University's decision to censor Archie Moore's work (a decision that was arguably made to keep the peace with conservative sponsors and politicians) was gradually spreading across campus—and given the University's influence over its student body—each query I fielded was a potentially risky exchange.

The Academic Colleague

Courting Blakness was an honest, radical, careful attempt to come together within university space and address issues of dispossession, marginalization and poverty, with both historical and structural causes. Such projects do not come naturally to a University sector subject to the vicissitudes of politics at all levels of government. There is always an established comfort

zone for critical engagement with political issues. *Courting Blakness* did not fit comfortably within this zone.

I discovered a deep vein of denial when it comes to the colonial legacy of racism manifested in the treatment of Indigenous Australians. I witnessed colleagues bringing indigenous activists to class only to see several students walk out muttering, "why do we need to hear this? Why should we feel guilty?" Working on the *Courting Blakness* projects was an education on where some of the fault lines in the academic discussion of race lie. My Department at UQ was supportive in terms of providing some funding for the project (several thousand dollars), but less forthcoming in terms of non-financial support. Several colleagues told me personally and during meetings of their "real" concerns that the project might trigger white anger and even violent backlash, for which they weren't ready. Their overall message was something along the lines of: "we realise that this project deals with issues that could be possibly important to engage in, but we worry that the form it takes might be too controversial to be productive." To someone who was used to politically engaged art, the project seemed well within boundaries of "respectful debate", that some of my colleagues were quick to raise concerns about.

Legacies and Reflections

The Curator

It was a marathon to finally get to September 5 and 6, 2014. A joyous occasion for all involved, a supportive environment for many who worked behind the scenes. A number of outstanding and high profile Aboriginal people were present from politicians, and academics, to curators, performers and artists. Despite all the obstacles that were thrown at us, the two day national symposium created an opportunity for a different type of discussion and pedagogy. Thought provoking papers were given as well as a wonderful keynote on Indigenous sovereignty by Professor of Law and author Larissa Behrendt. Lecturers in various faculties at UQ engaged with the art in the Great Court. Assignments were thoughtfully written

and volunteer students gave their time to educate their peers in the exhibition space. Barrister Andrew Boe launched the publication, *Courting Blakness: Recalibrating Knowledge in the Sandstone University*, on one balmy Brisbane afternoon in 2015 at the Gallery of Modern Art. Finally, we had achieved a momentous victory and no one could ever take that away from all of us, who contributed to the making of *Courting Blakness*. Another positive outcome is that the flags that were not allowed to fly on the Forgan Smith tower during the UQ exhibition have found a new public site for display. The works Archie Moore produced for *Courting Blakness* are now part of an original piece, comprising 28 flags. Re-titled, *United Neytions* and sold to the Sydney Airport late in 2017, the flags now hang from the 17 meter-high ceiling in the T1 International terminal.

The Project Manager and Academic

The challenges we confronted demonstrated the capacity of art to move participants and audiences beyond the comfortable confines of the "politics of recognition".[28] If part of the cultural function of the Great Court carvings was to contain Aboriginality within the possessive embrace of white academic disciplines, *Courting Blakness* audaciously suggested that this aesthetic and epistemological capture was incomplete and uncertain. For three weeks, the Great Court at The University of Queensland became a place of interdisciplinary dialogue across academic and non-academic borders. Rather than a marker of global distinction within a commodified education market and a fortress protective of the ignorance that sustains white possession, the university became a more politically and culturally permeable space.

The exhibition, symposium, teaching and learning and website, together with the book, proved that 'a different university is possible'. It also highlighted the limitations of top-down strategies that focus on the inclusion or the 'recognition' of lndigenous perspectives, students, and staff. As Bronwyn Frederick put it in her contribution to the edited publication: "I see that we were always in universities, even if we were not as human beings physically present".[29] I interpret this comment in two

ways. On one hand, as the Great Court iconography demonstrates, representations of Indigenous people preceded their arrival as students and faculty members. On the other hand, it alludes to Indigenous knowledge held by people and embodied in the very land on which the University was built. Both of these interpretations help me to understand and appreciate the labours of love that conceived and delivered *Courting Blakness* as a challenging gift to the neoliberal university.

The Academic Colleague

To embark on a project like *Courting Blakness* was to ask much of an institution whose current temperament is shaped by priorities ill disposed toward the processes of self-critique and self-reflection. The project was not just political in the sense of dealing with historical injustice and trauma, but also in the sense of challenging the university to be something other than it is becoming. In this respect, the project is a gesture of hope: that there remain possibilities for challenging the wholesale neoliberalization of education, and the reduction of humanities to so many forms of public relations and cultural comfort: highbrow entertainment for the edification of economic and political elites.

I am now based in the US where my research and teaching continues to investigate how societies come to terms with the aftermath of mass violence. I teach a course on Transitional Justice and Media in a public university where we examine the role of art in dealing with the traumatic past. We use *Courting Blakness* as a powerful example of how art can help us to address questions including: What does contemporary Indigenous art allow us to see? What does it prompt us to think and feel about the ways we occupy spaces of knowledge? What is the role of the arts in addressing issues of justice in the present? What should be the goal of communities, and their universities, in engaging in projects designed to remember and deal with past violence and associated forms of guilt or denial?

Racisms in our societies and our universities are not an isolated problem. Projects like *Courting Blakness* allow us all to learn, engage, and voice the frustration around this marginalization. They allow students to

engage seriously with the questions of the past, as they struggle with racist legacies in the present. As they become aware of the issues embodied in the art and architecture surrounding them, they don't want to be quiet anymore.

The Student Volunteer and Archivist

Sara Ahmed observes how promotional "diversity work" of universities can ultimately reproduce institutional whiteness.[30] Neoliberal universities are often better resourced to build their images than individuals and communities within and outside these structures. *Courting Blakness* represents not only an attempt to call an institution's self-representation into question, but also the adversity one can face in doing so. My contribution was to foreground the project's triumphs through the power of archiving. Despite the challenges we faced, we were able to shape the project's legacy. The archive we created is integral to the project's value. It provides a tool for educating future students—both at the University and elsewhere.[31]

What makes the archive especially important is that *Courting Blakness* was undoubtedly ahead of its time (or at least out of its time) when you consider the conservative political forces in power throughout the course of the project. Accordingly, I suspect that the archive will help ensure the project receives the full recognition and academic attention it deserves over the coming years. It is likely to be a useful and motivational resource for academics and artists wishing to develop similar projects in politically conservative environments.

Throughout the project, I felt a strong sense of community among the volunteers; indeed, I made a number of friends and have remained in contact with some. This sense of community stands out in my memory of the project; it sits in contrast to the individualism increasingly embraced by the neoliberal university as articulated, for example, in its rankism and casualisation of staff. This makes me especially proud to have been able to represent *Courting Blakness* on the front line.

Conclusion

Our experience in delivering *Courting Blakness* suggests that the most virtuous intentions, the most innovative strategic initiatives, the most culturally sensitive pedagogy will not bring Australians closer to justice with Indigenous nations. Nothing will shift until the fundamental relations of possession that structure our institutions and identities are properly understood and actively dismantled. This requires people with dedication and courage to 'work on the past' in the face of white possessive interests that would contain Indigenous knowledge and political aspirations. The creative frictions catalysed by *Courting Blakness* demonstrate the beautiful power of art in this process.

Notes

1. When we refer to 'race' in this chapter, we are not evoking concepts of biological or cultural difference nor are we referring to 'civilizational' values. Anti-racist movements within universities and activist spaces insist on the distinction between the propositions that there are different *types of human beings* – on one hand – and that there are different *ways of being human* - on the other hand. The experiences we will relate highlight the challenges of dispensing with the former in social contexts forged by white settler-colonialism.
2. Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power and Indigenous* Sovereignty (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), xiii.

3. Rauna Kuokkanen, *Reshaping the university: Responsibility, Indigenous Epistemes, and the Logic of the Gift* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 84–8.

4. Official Opening event of Courting Blakness: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cizBt-Cf4w0

5. For Fiona Foley's curatorial vision, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwCbkJoit6s; for Fiona Nicoll's discussion of the vision for learning, discovery and engagement, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXKPHCSLh4I

6. For a detailed report on the project's scope and accomplishments see https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XwCFvPFXR-2XaPto6RG4cCNzbEU3Kv9L/view?usp=sharing and appendices: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1__HQbOA-U1fLXvoPHnMc-L8V3SZ__RyC/view?usp=sharing

7. See theoretical rationale for the importance of 'telling stories' provided by critical race and feminist theorist, Malinda Smith in "Gender, Whiteness and "other Others" in the Academy," in *States of race: Critical race feminism for the 21st century* ed. Sherene Razack et al. (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2010), 42–43.

8. For a rigorous and comprehensive critique of deficit approaches to education see David Gilmour, *Racism in Education: Coincidence or Conspiracy* (NY/London: Routledge, 2008).

9. See Sara Ahmed on the 'non-performativity' of anti-racism in *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 116–121.

10. For a detailed account of this work and of Fiona Foley's impact on Australian art and public discourse see Helmrich, Michele ed. *Fiona Foley: Forbidden* (Sydney and St Lucia: Museum of Contemporary Art and The University of Queensland Art Museum, 2010), 22.

11. See John East, "Jack F Hennessy, Architect of the Great Court at The University of Queensland," *Fryer Folios*, 91 (2014) 15. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O4XF7xutbgVqClawhNK2j38bJPk-yduz/view?usp=sharing

12. See Katrina Schlunke, "A blak woman walks through a blakened landscape," in *Courting Blakness: Recalibrating Knowledge in the Sandstone University* ed. Fiona Foley et al. (St Lucia: The University of Queensland Press, 2015), 53.

13. The notable exception to this narrative is the Michie building archway carvings by the second Great Court Sculptor, Rhyl Hinwood. Hinwood actively recognized Indigenous knowledge as recorded both in the

historical archives of the first settler-colonists and through the poetry of Indigenous activist and public intellectual Oodgeroo Noonuccal. For more information see appendix to outcomes report, 62–68. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1__HQbOA-U1fLXvoPHnMc-L8V3SZ__RyC/view?usp=sharing

14. See interview with Brisbane based activist, Sam Watson in *The Aboriginal Tent Embassy: Sovereignty, Black Power, Land Rights and the State* ed. G. Foley et al. (New York/London: Routledge, 2014), 128; and Lila Watson's explanation of Indigenous knowledge at the launch of the *Courting Blakness* project: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SymcJZ066w

15. For more on this case, see Chloe Hooper, *The Tall Man: Death and Life on Palm Island* (Australia: Penguin, 2009).

16. See Fiona Foley, *The Art of Politics/the Politics of Art: The Place of Indigenous Contemporary Art* (Southport, Qld: Keeaira Press, 2006).

17. Theodor Adorno, *Critical Models. The Meaning of Working Through the Past.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 91.

18. See Michael Aird, *Captured: Early Brisbane photographers and their Aboriginal Subjects* (Brisbane: Museum of Brisbane, 2014); see also *Calling the Shots: Aboriginal Photographies*, ed. Jane Lydon (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2014).

19. See interview with Ryan Presley at the *Courting Blakness* project launch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0MCdhNxa0s

20. Zala Volcic provides an international perspective at the project launch here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqSDX6NqNyU

21. See introduction to project here at the launch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-bTQKqwQGE

22. See Kuokkanen, *Reshaping the University,* 83–85.

23. The university policy that *Courting Blakness* directly responded to was "Educational Principles on Indigenous Australian Matters" (2007) aimed to '… develop strategies to improve the understanding of students and staff of Indigenous issues and to recognize the importance and contribution of Indigenous knowledge as an emerging discipline.' See Katelyn Barney, *Teaching, Learning and Enacting the Education Principles of Indigenous Australian matters (EPIAM) at The University of Queensland* (The University of Queensland, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit, 2012), 4.

24. See Jon Altman and Melinda Hinkson, *Coercive Reconciliation: Stabilise, Normalise, Exit Aboriginal Australia* (Melbourne: Arena Publications, 2007); and Alissa McCoun, "Aboriginality and the Northern Territory intervention," *Journal of Political Science*, 46 (2011) 517.

25. See Fiona Nicoll on the semiotic regime of the Australian War Memorial – a piece of architecture built around the same time as the Great Court and influenced by interwar theories of white racial superiority in *From Diggers to Drag Queens: Configurations of Australian National Identity* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 2001).

26. For a detailed argument about the limitations of the 'politics of recognition', see Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014) and for an explanation of why this type of politics continues to fail Indigenous youth, see Jaskiran Dhillon, *Indigenous Youth, Decolonization, and the Politics of Intervention* (Toronto: UTP, 2017), 71, 178.

27. See interview with Archie Moore at the *Courting Blakness* project launch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kNfGQaLE7s

28. Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks;* Jaskiran Dhillon, *Indigenous Youth,* 71, 178.

29. Bronwyn Fredericks, "Of Old and New: Messages Conveyed by Australian Universities,*"* in *Courting Blakness,* ed. Fiona Foley et al.*,* 78; 80.

30. Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included,* 175.

31. See two of my documentary clips: (1) students' response to the project: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6SBxRKioMo; and (2) a short montage of the exhibition and symposium: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EueoJsZCU0

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10

"Singing Up the Second Story": Acts of Community Development Scholar "Delicate Activism" Within the Neoliberal University

Peter Westoby and Lynda Shevellar

Introduction

Drawing on the conceptual work of "Bifo" Beradi[1] and Nicholas Rose,[2] this chapter examines the possibilities of academic resistance to neoliberalism. In the context of neoliberalism, which is explained below, we focus on the phenomenon whereby academia is currently constructed in a way that it contradictorily both draws on our "creative selves"—our "soul" as Beradi conceives of it, where we put our heart and soul into our work as teachers, researchers and writers—and yet also ensures the failure of that endeavour—a "sinking of the soul"—due the highly competitive system linked to, and constructed by, contemporary academic life, metrics and

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audit. Beradi's work particularly foregrounds the mental health costs of current neoliberal incursions and permutations, while Rose's work considers the management of the self that occurs in such spaces, a process that is simultaneously constraining and enabling.

Methodologically, the chapter uses narrative practice and biographical double listening to explore what is understood as the first story and second story of elements of our academic experiences.[3] The first story captures rich text description of the social and mental suffering occurring within neoliberal academic spaces. The second story elicits the values, skills and knowledges being used by both authors to navigate the space in a way that is generative and enables what we refer to as a 'delicate activism'.[4]

Our Background/Context

The context for this chapter is our position at The University of Queensland where Peter has worked for the last 11 years, and Lynda for the past nine. We are located in the School of Social Science, in the discipline of sociology, but we identify first and foremost as community development (CD) scholars.

On the University's webpage, under the broad header "About UQ", is the following opening paragraph:

> UQ ranks in the top 50 as measured by the Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities. The University also ranks 51 in the QS World University Rankings, 52 in the US News Best Global Universities Rankings, 60 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and 55 in the Academic Ranking of World Universities.[5]

This tells you that in this impressive institution ranking matters—and it matters a great deal. This opening paragraph captures the corporatised neoliberal context in which we work. And it is a picture painted well by the other chapters of this collection. Neoliberalism is understood as "an economically driven political ideology that emphasizes the primacy of the free market and private enterprise and promotes individualism and competition".[6] In the academic world the effect is that universities become more closed to non-economic purposes, and more open to external mar-

ket engagement, which is manifest in a dominant audit culture; an obsession with metrics; the relentless pursuit of large research grants; an emphasis upon short-term outputs; patenting and commercialising research; and turning ideas into products to be taken to market. Of equal concern, however, and the focus of this chapter, is the profound shift in our relationships that this creates: to ourselves, our practice, and the possibilities of being an academic.[7] As McWilliam et al. laments, "One sort of romance about being an academic is no longer speakable, thinkable, do-able in universities…" and is replaced by "a new romance in which the enterprising academic is the central figure".[8]

The multiple texts on the corporatised neoliberal universities—and the equal proliferation of texts denouncing corporatist values—paint a picture of this corporate university as a *fait accompli*. For example, Donoghue observes, "Market categories of productivity, efficiency and competitive achievement, not intelligence or erudition, already drive…the academic world".[9] Yet such analyses omit the contested space in which we work. Our context is well resourced with extraordinary facilities, environmental beauty and we are surrounded by colleagues of high intellectual calibre. We have an intellectual freedom unheard of in the public service and the payment for our endeavours far exceeds that which we have received in our previous roles in community organisations. To work here is an extraordinary privilege and we are only too conscious that, at least in academic circles, we enjoy the cachet of the institution for which we work. The environment exhibits not only push but also pull factors. As Ferguson muses, we need to be careful in our critique of neoliberalism that we are not left with a politics of negation and disdain, or an empty analysis, which prevents a creative engagement with alternative futures.[10] Instead we argue that it is the dynamics of this contested space which provide the cracks through which we may squeeze.

Conceptual Orientation: Colonising the Soul; Governing the Soul

Our conceptual approach begins with "Bifo" Beradi,[11] an Italian writer, whose critical theory focuses on understanding contemporary capitalism and its particular restructuring of the workplace. Within this analytical

lineage, he argues that since the 1970s, at least within advanced capitalist economies, work has been transformed for many as a place of cognitive labour, as people use their minds at work more than their bodies. It is within this space of cognitive labour that desire, creativity and imagination are most manifest. Work is now where most people love to be, in contrast to the time prior to the 1970s, when most people wanted to work less, as work was mainly mechanical labour. Helen Trinca and Catherine Fox explain how for many people "suddenly it's fine to admit that work means a lot to us, that we like our jobs, that we sometimes feel more complete and integrated at work than in our private lives".[12] Numerous authors see the real benefits of this experience of work, arguing that at last "we can be ourselves, bringing our creativity into the workplace".[13] In a sense, then, people are now at their most creative, intelligent selves at work, and therefore they want to spend more time there.

As a result, people's identities and energies are constructed less from community, or the social fabric of society, than from the social factory where they are employed. For many, work becomes their community. However, from a critical perspective this creative and imaginative work is colonised by a competitive neoliberal capitalist economic system, which creates failure; after all, it is impossible for everyone to win in a competitive space. It also creates stress as people become tired of creating, of constantly making themselves, and of competing, which ultimately manifest in anxiety, panic and depression. Bifo argues that the soul has been colonised[14] by this kind of modern cognitive labour in the social factory, and that furthermore, "something in the collective soul has seized up".[15] For Bifo, soul, as gravity of the body, takes people into these seized, panicked, depressed places as a potential gift in the sense of a warning, because these states of seizure, panic and depression can also invite reconsideration of how they might want to live and work. With such an analysis in mind, our chapter in dialogue with the likes of Bifo, focuses on how to recreate autonomous and strategic sites of work, action and community that offer an alternative to the current structure of neoliberal capitalist enterprise.

For Nikolas Rose the key issue is governing of the soul and the response is "freedom". This analytical framework raises fundamental questions:

how does each person choose to live and work, or how might each of us individually, then collectively, re-imagine our freedom? Here Rose's works, *Governing the Soul* [16] and *Powers of Freedom,*[17] offer some useful frames for thinking. Rose argues that within most modern societies there is little that we share—we don't share identity or an essence. What we do share is our status as subjects of government. Basically, most of the time, we all do what we're told. And we do this because we are subjects of "regimes that act upon our conduct in the proclaimed interest of our individual and collective well-bring".[18] That is, we tend to align our own interests with those who govern us—for this chapter, the university authorities. Or as Ball and Olmedo suggest, "we come to want for ourselves what is wanted from us, when our moral sense of our desires and ourselves are aligned with its pleasures".[19] However, Rose argues that, "to the extent that we are governed in our own name, we have a right to contest",[20] in fact, we have a responsibility to contest. Without this contestation, democracy is in deep trouble.

Methodology

To interrogate our experiences with a degree of rigour, we embarked upon a narrative approach and utilised the practice of "double-listening".[21, 22] Double listening requires us to hear a person's story at multiple levels. The first story we often hear is one that shares the impacts and effects of different events. The second story is based on a person's responses to those events and their impacts.

In the present research we interviewed one another, inviting each other to tell the story of "How do you suffer in the neoliberal university?" The impacts and effects essentially created a first story. At the same time, we were listening for the second story that could be framed as "How did you resist?" or "What helped you survive?"

The language of suffering—while sounding somewhat histrionic—is important to the process. In telling our story of "suffering" we are conscious firstly, of deliberately giving voice to stories that in any other context would be dismissed as "debriefing" or less nobly, "having a whinge in the corridor". We want to suggest that the things that we felt slighted by

are actually meaningful and we gave ourselves permission to share these hurts and the wounding we have experienced. Secondly, in telling our stories in no way do we mean to diminish the "suffering" of others. Some of our experiences would be equally true for our colleagues in the private, government or community sectors. Our hope is that some of our second stories might be equally relevant.

Findings

Following our description of the methodology we have organised the findings under two main parts, according to the first and second story. We present parts of the first-person narratives emerging from interviewing one another, and provide some simple commentary to set context, or reflect on what was shared. But most of the analysis occurs in the Discussion that follows.

Part A: First Story: Sources of Suffering

In reply to Peter asking Lynda about the source of work-related suffering, she replied,

> My most prominent experience of working at a university is a daily question that arises within me from the moment I wake. Before my feet hit the floor, I am mentally working through my to-do lists with a knot in the pit of my stomach. As I consider all I need to get to I am left with a profound choice: "Who am I going to disappoint today?" I simply cannot do all that I need to do in the time I need to do it in. I am forced to take actions that compromise my professionalism, reputation and sense of self-efficacy.

Partly this is about the sheer *amount* of work, but it also seems to be enabled by a *manic speed.* The Australian poet, cartoonist, philosopher and sage, Michael Leunig frames this as the "sheer maddening velocity of life" and as he further observes, "Nothing can be loved at speed".[23] The nexus speed and amount add up to a sense of being overwhelmed—that feeling Lynda described when awaking. Lynda explained that it is not

simply that there is large volume of work, and that it moves very fast, but that it also includes jumping back and forth between so many different types of thinking. Berardi observes that "we can have access to the modalities of digital telecommunication from everywhere and at all times, and in fact we have to, since this is the only way to participate in the labour market. We can reach every point in the world but, more importantly, we can be reached from every point in the world".[24] He observes that "everywhere attention is under siege".[25] No wonder we are disappointing many who feel they do not get the required attention.

This echoes the analysis of Guy Standing, known for his work on the precariat, who observes that our time is "invaded" and we are unable to maintain the boundaries of activities. He argues that, "the pressure to combine tasks, often very different in character, leads to situations of "unbounded rationality"…It is almost the new norm for people to face a barrage of demands on time at any moment".[26] Aligned to this, and for Lynda, it means "I spend my time emailing apologies: 'I'm sorry for the delay…', 'I know I said I'd get this to you last week…', 'Thank you for your patience with me'". For Lynda the greatest source of suffering is that "There is an insane busy-ness. Yet every time I acknowledge it, I hear the words of Robert Dessaux in my ears, that 'to be busy is to advertise one own's enslavement'".[27]

Hence, we see Beradi's "colonising of the soul" at work—feeling a loss of autonomy, and enslavement, and yet it is also a product of Rose's "governing the soul", as Lynda finds herself managing herself according to the institutional flow and shaping herself as a responsible, responsive colleague and teacher.

Berg and Seeber note that "the changes to academic labour have increased the expectations of what it means to be a productive scholar, while simultaneously increasing class size and expanding our job descriptions".[28] Lynda observes that she is a researcher, and teacher, as well as project manager, administrator, entrepreneur, grant writer, and pastoral carer, marketer, graphic designer, website administrator, accountant, program manager and innovator, as well as needing to be competent in all aspects of technology and administration and up-to-date in every iteration of university strategy, system, policy and process. As well as to strive to be of "exceptional calibre", and to make "contributions to excellence",

for "outstanding achievement", and "proactive interventions" and to be "enterprising" and engaging in "entrepreneurship and innovation". Lynda again shares:

> I am left weary before I begin. There's simply too much to do, and there is no give and rarely anything approximating downtime. I am no stranger to hard work and long hours. But there is something about this context that leaves me more depleted and disheartened than in any other workplace. Every semester the university world spins faster and faster. I'm left wondering: "But when do I get time to think deeply and creatively about my teaching? Or do the in-depth reading and thinking required to stay on top of my field?"

Turning from Lynda to Peter's response, a reflection on the question of suffering focuses more on the social and what he understands as the structural dimension. For example, he started by sharing how,

> I wake up and I live with the dilemma of I have a day at home to work— what a privilege to have that choice—but gee, it gets lonely sometimes. And in contrast to staying home, when I get up and walk to the office, what I genuinely encounter is that every academic's door is shut, with the only gatherings being for meetings or chance encounters in the corridor. People mostly eat their lunch at their desk. And so, it is equally lonely because it's all transactional. There is little that is collegial—and I mean collegial in the human sense of asking, "How are you really going?"

The other suffering is the structural suffering. There are several elements of the structural. For example, Peter recounts here he undertakes a large amount of work in response to a faculty request—researching, writing and sending him a document and yet there is no response: no acknowledgement, no "thank you". He hears from the head of his school there will be a discussion about it. There is little that is relational and human within the structures of hierarchy.

Another example of this structural suffering is that as they move towards January each year Australian academics have to choose whether to invest a month of work into a grant application process for the Australian Research Grant Discovery rounds—that have an approximate 14 percent success rate. It is a hard call to invest in work of such

low odds, and also with the knowledge that, as was told to Lynda recently in an appraisal: "We don't expect you to be successful, but we do expect you to keep trying". For Berardi, such labour is indicative of new forms of alienation that focus on putting the soul—rather than just physical labour—to work: "Our desiring energy is trapped in the trick of self-enterprise, our libidinal investments are regulated according to economic rules, our attention is captured in the precariousness of virtual networks. Every fragment of mental energy must be transformed into capital".[29]

Part B: Second Story—What Practices Enable Survival and/or Resistance

To engage with the second story, we listened to each other through the lens of inquiring, *What are the daily practices that enable us to survive, or even resist?* Embedded in each of the stories told above were also second stories practices of survival, however, we focus on particular stories in this section that highlight broader themes.

For Peter these practices focus upon connection—the antidote to his sense of loneliness and the dehumanised structures he inhabits. He names three simple, but important practices. Every morning that Peter arrives in his university office he says, "good morning" to his personal spiritual trilogy: three pictures on the all in the office: Leonard Cohen, Verne Harris (a dear friend) and Nelson Mandela. He explains how "they connect me to life and love". Secondly, he says,

> Every day I walk home through a cemetery, and on the walk I repeat the mantra, 'The university wants all of me, but the gravestones remind me that, "None of this really matters"' – the books I write will decay.

This physical act of walking is one of shifting both body and soul. Peter explains that it is a liminal transition from the university to his neighbourhood that invites other things. Thirdly, Peter acknowledges,

> The discipline of meditation and journaling that connect me with my deeper vocation. In my journal, I invite myself to bring Soul to the day,

which for me equals connection, which in turn invites "Being present", which is about trying to bring a quality to meetings that is easy to lose.

Finally, Peter pushes back against the workplace norms, noting that when exhausted he refuses to stoically "push through". Peter shares how he takes a siesta each day, whether at home or in the office. Peter embraces the wisdom of Robert Dessaix who remarked, 'The siesta is the city dwellers act of resistance…belonging to no one but the person who takes it'.[30]

For Lynda, the second story includes "attempting to combat the rush of working life" which requires a different "ethics of time".[31] Lynda shared how,

> It feels counter-intuitive, but given a sense of perpetual busyness, the challenge is to take time for ourselves and time for the other. For me, it lives in what I think of as the extra line in the email or the stopping for tea. I challenge myself to slow down my frenetic email sessions and the thrashing of the keyboard, ensuring that I take time to insert my humanity in the midst of instrumental interactions. So, I say, "Of course you can have an extension. I'm so sorry to hear your awful news and my heart goes out to you." When I am feeling like I don't have a minute to breathe—that's the moment I take time to make a cup of tea or invite a colleague for coffee.

Lynda's resistances then, as per this short narrative, are about re-humanising the work, through care and deliberation, and seeing people in relationship rather than in role, but also a resistance of the self—as will be explored later on.

As CD practitioners we are grounded in a practice wisdom that moves from individual issues to shared concerns and a collective analysis. We therefore asked of ourselves a third question, "What issues do we share and what are our collective practices of resistance?" What became increasingly clear was that the parts of the neoliberal university which affected us both were the individualistic, inhuman, and competitive components of the work—which ran in direct opposition to our values of collegiality, mutuality and reciprocity. We then searched for the spaces where alternative practices, echoing these values, were evident, and this led to another distinct story.

Engaged Scholars in Partnership with Community, Social Workers and Activists

Being an engaged scholar in the fields of community and social development, we ask: Who do we work with and for and why? We deliberately do as much research as we can *with* practitioners and activists in *co-discovery* modalities. We construct our scholarship in a way that we cannot do it alone; that we do it in a relationship with practitioners and activists that is less extractivist than the norm, and also in a dialogical way that requires us to let go of control and ego. That is the paradigm shift.

Our university deploys the discourse of "community engagement". Generally, their meaning is to build research relationships in order to extract money, such as the $10 M donation from Dow Chemical Company in 2012, to establish the UQ Dow Centre for Sustainable Engineering Innovation. Of course, the word "extract" is not used. The language is one of partnerships and collaborations. But as Winter, Wiseman and Muirhead noted,

> Considering that neo-liberal principles still hold significant sway and higher education in Australia, as in other parts of the world, is increasingly being run according to a model that prioritizes commercialization and competition, the sustainability of community engagement that resists neo-liberal policy remains unclear.[32]

As Lesley Woods observes, community engagement is positioned as a core strategic aim in higher education internationally:

> Community-based research is supposed to promote the co-creation of contextually relevant knowledge to assist communities' capacity for addressing issues they deem important for learning and development. However, it remains a challenge to conduct authentic participatory democratic research within the restricted timeframes and rigid ethical requirements of academia, traditionally geared towards a more researcher-driven form of inquiry. It is thus difficult to expose underlying structural barriers to development, unless academic researchers adopt epistemological and methodological paradigms that require meta reflection on the process and foreground community of definitions of what change is valuable.[33]

Although we recognise and certainly feel the pressure, we try to resist what we see as an extractive and colonising approach to the work. We also co-write and present at conferences with community partners, and publish our work in multiple modalities. We write theory-driven texts for top publishing houses and tier one journals, but we also write accessible practice-oriented accounts in local newsletters and practitioner magazines.

Of course, through a Foucauldian lens, these practices are both enabling and limiting.[34] They enable us to embrace our agency and reconstruct our ways of working on our own terms. However, they do not "count" in the metric-driven belly of the university and there are costs to this.

Discussion: Creating Cracks, Towards a Delicate Activism

A key tenet of community development theory and practice is to take what is felt to be a "private concern", and through collective forms of conversation, relationship building, and shared analysis, to take the felt private concern into the realm of collective "public action". There is a sense that even taking the time to listen to one another's stories as co-authors, has been a part of that kind of community development theory-in-practice. Giving voice to our experiences in the form of narrative has built a shared understanding of our lived experience, and enabled us to see clearly that our individual private experiences are in fact shared, and therefore public issues. As Brooks, Franklin-Phipps and Rath reflect, "we choose to resist by working collaboratively and towards remaining intelligible (both to ourselves and to those outside the academy) while becoming scholars".[35] Authoring those stories in this chapter is part of moving them into the public realm. Here, for us, lies the start of cracking open the university institution to further analysis and academic agency.

Giving voice to our narratives also enables shared analysis, which in turn builds consciousness, or what Freire called "conscientisation".[36] To feel and voice our way into the shared ways in which we both

experience colonising and governing of the soul is part of this process. To have "named" the world of 'colonising and governing', is to re-gain a literacy about our experience of academic life, giving language to what we experience, which in turn opens up further cracks for agency as a practice of resistance. For example, for both of us the second story recounted above, of being clearer about our stance on community-oriented and dialogical-research, as opposed to extractive-research, gives a stronger sense of how to be the kind of researchers we want to be even within the current context. Berg and Seeber note that, "because research is what gains most visibility in the current university, it offers a particularly fertile site for resistance. We *can* choose how we talk about our scholarship to each other and more publicly".[37] During the course of authoring this chapter we have initiated a *South-East Queensland Network of Community Development Scholars and Educators* which will focus on how to be such scholars within the current neo-liberal university context, thereby giving further platforms for shared analysis and action.

Beradi and Rose's work both give a language to see what we are experiencing—which also enables more conscious resistance through exercising agency. To resist is to understand agency, and understanding agency is to make sense of how academic life is constructed by theory and practice. There is no essential academic life, only that which is constituted by theory and practice, held in dialectic relationship. Beradi and Rose have enabled us to reflect on our practice, which in turn supports a particular sense of agency. As Standing notes, "human agency is the core of decommodification" and it is this kind of rehumanising of academic life that we yearn for.[38] This seeing and resisting can then be infused with a form of contestation that we think of as 'delicate activism'. Such delicate activism does not always imply overt politics. To return to our stories, it can mean taking time for a siesta, or crafting an email that is infused with the human. Some theorists would argue that our aspirations are the equivalent of Scott's "weapons of the weak"[39]—invisible and not overtly challenging the status quo—however, we prefer to understand them as subtle, soulful, jujitsu-like forms of agency and attack and understand them through this lens of 'delicate activism'.

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11

Making 'Visible' the 'Invisible' Work of Academic Writing in an Audit Culture

Katarina Tuinamuana, Robyn Bentley-Williams, and Joanne Yoo

Introduction

We have spent the past year writing journal articles. This is of course not unusual in the academic world. The difference for us this time around was that we wrote as part of a Writing Group project, supported by a writing specialist, and partly funded by our university employer. The end goal, as defined by the call for expressions of interest to attend, was the submission of an academic article to a high-esteem journal by the end of the year.

In this chapter, we use our experiences as academic writers as part of this organised Writing Group to explore the invisible work of scholarly writing in an audit culture. We do this, not only as a practice of critical reflection, but because we want to lay bare the structural motifs that might act in an interrelationship with our experiences to [re]make our

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work as academics in neoliberal universities.[1] Our analysis is located in our everyday experiences individually and as a group, and how these are entangled in the 'ruling relations' that both constrained and enabled our writing practice. 'Ruling relations' is not primarily a theoretical construct, but can be understood as a "material social formation, continually enacted and re-enacted in time and place".[2] In this sense, 'ruling' is not necessarily about structure, rather it is seen in the social practices of the everyday. This analysis is significant because it allows us to better understand our everyday practice, and how it can act as a basis for action.

We start with the story of the original writing group, and then narrate how a subgroup of three emerged and continued the work of writing and critical reflection.

The Original Writing Group: Seven Become Three, Plus One, Minus One

At the beginning of the academic year, all staff in our School of Education were invited to join a "Writing Masterclass". Only seven staff (out of about 50) responded. Very few of us have workload hours for research and writing. What little we have is subsumed by the large teaching and student administration load that many carry. So to commit to a writing group that required attendance at full day Master classes throughout the year and the submission of a journal article to a high status journal was a big ask.

No workload hours were provided to individual staff who signed up, but the drawcard was the inclusion of a writing expert to run the sessions. Over a period of six months, four full-day workshops were run, and participants were expected to do their own writing in between. Because of the popularity of the workshop-style approach, and the expertise and approach of the facilitator, two further workshops were organised for later that year.

We started with seven members, and by the end of the year were left with four. Of these, three continued into setting up a small sub-group. We then invited a fourth person (newly appointed to the university) to join us as a critical friend. Halfway through the follow-up year, one member left due to work pressures. The remaining three academics are current authors of this article.

The original Masterclass was largely successful in compliance terms as each participant met the stated goal: submit one journal article to a high-esteem journal. The facilitator was very experienced with significant expertise and emotional intelligence. She worked to meet a variety of needs in the group, and shared writing tools to work with. Individual, one-on-one feedback was provided to each of us on our writing at every meeting. And yet on reflection, there must have been other motivations for us to keep us coming back for more. What was it that kept us going? What was the invisible work of participating in a writing group that we could not see at the time? Had we become too closely tied to university imperatives, and were these overly driving our desire to publish? These questions underpin the study reported on here.

Methodological Approach

This paper uses a co-autoethnographic methodology informed by institutional ethnography and conducted from the standpoint of a group of three women academics. Autoethnography "seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience".[3] Although seen by some commentators as lacking in methodological rigour, autoethnography has persisted as a way to acknowledge difference and to make connections to emotions and embodiment in the research process from a socio-cultural positioning. As an extension, co-autoethnography acknowledges the social and communal nature of academic meaning-making. Chang, Nyunjiri and Hernande[4] describe co-autoethnography or collaborative autoethnography as a way that individuals can contribute unique and autobiographical perspective to a multi-voiced text. This combination of voices can create rich, complex and layered texts as individual voices are interrogated within a community of practitioners.

We also use Dorothy Smith's approach to institutional ethnography. Institutional ethnography is interested in the realities of people's everyday lives. It is not an Interpretivist form of research that rests on the meaning-making of individuals, but instead uses these everyday experiences of the concrete lived experience to locate relations of power within

these experiences. These relations of power are not separate from us as research subjects, but are embedded in our daily practices. As outlined by Campbell and Devault,[5] Smith's approach is based on the understanding that "consciousness arises, out of people's interactions with others and the work they do together".

Campbell and Devault point out that unlike many forms of governmentality research, institutional ethnography "keeps the experiencing subject at the centre of the analysis and in discovering how ruling enters research settings through people's work knowledges and activities, it identifies how local actors perform thereby the ruling of their own lives".[6] Our interest is not in the institution per se; rather we analyse the social activities of the institution as a way to make its workings visible.

To explore the invisible work of writing, we met several times to talk and reflect on our experiences, guided by questions prepared by Lola (Pseudonyms are used throughout). The main discussion was recorded and transcribed. The group met several times afterwards to talk through this 'data', and we added further discussions and caveats to our original work.

In these discussions, we responded to questions about our experiences with the writing group retrospectively. These questions only guided the discussion, much like a semi-structured interview would do:

1. What are your experiences of writing? What are you working on now?
2. What is good writing? How do you respond to bad writing?
3. What were your experiences of the writing group? What did you get out of it? What made you come, what made you stay?

We make no claims that these memories are necessarily "accurate" or "true representations" of what occurred the previous year. In this regard, our approach is similar to that suggested by Baker[7] in analysing textual data: our aim is not necessarily to locate "interior beliefs or to locate descriptions of social settings (exteriors) … it is organised to identify the speakers' methods of using categories and activities in accounts. … this is a roundabout way (but the only one possible) of identifying cultural knowledge … audible and visible in how people account to one another, whatever might be inside their heads".[8] We found that it became easier to

access this cultural knowledge as we accounted to one another in our discussions. In the next section, an initial analysis of our discussions is presented.

Co-constructing Experiences

We were curious about how, even though we had met institutional requirements by submitting a journal article each, we were ambivalent about what this might mean for us as a group of writers struggling to perform the work of academia in increasingly demanding situations. We agreed that there seemed to be a set of tensions emerging from our conversations. These tensions are used here to frame our discussion of the invisible work of writing.

Loving and Hating Writing (Ambivalence)

We started our discussion with a free-writing prompt on the question "What are your experiences of writing". Our responses were mixed:

Niki: I've written a stream of consciousness, so I don't think … I don't think I really want to read it out loud, but other people might want to read theirs.

Olga: I just wrote dot points

Meg: I found the emotional dimension in just writing gave me another chance to get in that head space, and I've missed that…. It wasn't about getting the perfect sentence; it was the actual pleasure in writing.

In this very early exchange, we see how we are accounting to each other in different ways, and that the initial hesitation to speak, or perhaps to dominate the conversation, or to jump in and take a risk is overcome through the interactive nature of the group dynamic. As the conversation continued well into the 2-hour time mark, more was said, more was shared, and the initial inhibitions faded away. Thematically, this was the

beginning of a metaphorical pushback into allowing us to voice our experiences with writing, directly and without apology:

Niki:	I love writing, but it gives me the shits sometimes… when I have to think about publishing it in a particular format. So, I don't mind the writing, and I do different types of writing, but having to structure it and organise…. And then getting reviews from people who say "you've got to do this, you've got to do that" … it just takes the pleasure out of writing for me.
Niki then comes back to add:	But, it sort of annoyed me, because when I've got a paper rejected and I get feedback from the reviewer … it meant that I had to do more work on it, and it annoyed me that I had to do more work in order to get it published. It didn't annoy me in terms of the actual feedback, because the feedback was spot on [laughs]. The thing is, I *had* rushed… I now rush my writing and I'm trying to get it out in time so it can be published that year.

This Janus-like experience with writing was developed further in our conversation. It became evident that, as a group, we enjoyed writing, and yet our actual experiences of it sometimes suggested the opposite. Part of this ambivalence stemmed from what was seen as competing demands on our time.

Olga:	Good writing takes time and space…. Unfortunately in our line of work we don't get that space … to just think.
Lola:	So do you think that your teaching will suffer if you invest some more time in research and writing?
Olga:	I don't know if it will suffer … there's no doubt that the research and the writing makes your teaching far richer…. But it's just finding a balance.
Lola:	Do you think we're approaching writing in a way that we're not finding that balance?
Olga:	Well, it comes down to what Niki said earlier about [being] so focussed on outputs … just churning them out, that we're not even focussed on quality.

Olga comes back later to say:

My writing style is not scholarly … I like narrative, I like to tell a story… that's how I write. And so, having to funnel my writing into this really prescriptive formula just doesn't work for me and, actually, it makes me resent the whole writing process.

It seemed then that although the group seemed to enjoy writing, and to get benefits from the practice of writing, there was a set of contradictions about how we felt about writing in the academy. For one member, these contradictions had to do with changes in her writing practices over time:

Niki: In the past I would write one piece of writing at a time, whatever it was – for a text book, or journal article – because that's how I like to focus. Now, at this precise moment in time, I've got about three articles on the go and one research report, and it's not working very well, to be honest. It's not as if I'm using the same data set to write three different papers, they're just three papers that I've been carrying with me, like, you know, excess baggage, for the last three or four years…. and I'm just feeling the pressure to publish each one of them, whereas in the past, I would have probably put two in the bin, and just focus on one. But now, I'm feeling like I need to be a little greedy. I need to get everything done. I need to get three papers out….

Niki is aware that she has become overwhelmed by the pressure to publish as much as possible, and yet the contradiction is that in trying to be prolific, she has instead experienced struggles with getting papers published in the last five years as their quality has declined.

Others in the group related varying stories about their relationship with writing but the message was clear: writing for publication demanded a very particular type of writing, and a lot of it. We each had our strategies to work with these demands, but increasingly had found the demands impacting our lives in detrimental ways.

Being a Writer/Researcher and Being a Teacher (Identity)

A second set of tensions emerged around who we were, and how we saw ourselves as writers in the university setting. On reflection each of our responses in this area connected to where we were in terms of career progression, and our individual histories as teachers/writers/academics.

Olga: I don't identify as a researcher, that's my big problem. I don't see myself as an academic, and I feel, sort of, almost, like, a bit of a fraud. If I'm writing papers that, you know, people want to read and cite, and … and who am I? I feel I'm not an authority on these things, and that's something I've got to get my head around, because it's a bit of a roadblock for me.

Lola: So would you say you need to cultivate a love for research, is that what you're saying? And how does one get that?

Olga: Look, I think that's really hard…. I've got a paper that I think is quite good, I've had [an external mentor] validate that paper, and she also said it's quite good. But then, to send them to two journals and have them both reject the article, that's tough … it's ego bashing … you need some type of affirmation … yeah, "Olga, you are okay at this".

Olga's experience shows how her identity as a researcher/writer is tied up with an uncertainty about whether the work is considered good enough for publication, coupled with the effects of rejection of her paper from two journal outlets. It's also worth noting that Olga was publishing outside the dominant discourse of her discipline, another barrier to publishing especially for early career researchers. It's unclear how we as academics develop a sense of self around writing, dependent as it is on outside affirmation in the form of rejection or acceptance from a publishing industry that now has to reject increasingly large numbers of papers because of the increased traffic of papers submitted in a measure-and-audit culture.

Another perspective offered in our discussions acknowledged the effects of the accountability cultures of performance on how we saw ourselves:

Meg: I think we've got to get out of the lock-step, audited processes that are stifling us. And we don't have the encouragement to be creative. We're performers, aren't we? [Pause] Sometimes I feel used up.

Olga: But creativity takes time. You know, and it takes mental space and mental rest. And if you don't get that, that's the problem.

Niki: When you talk about scholarship of teaching and how you enjoy being around people who have passion for it … I don't think we have that here. We talk about getting into the scholarship of teaching, but when people talk about it, I generally don't hear any pleasure in their voices … it's seen as just another thing that we have to do to get [workload] hours…. I think you can still do it within the time that you have, but I do understand that, the thought of adding another thing to your list of things to do, can be all-consuming. I don't think it's anyone's fault, necessarily, I think it's … because we're all caught up with this need to "produce and count, produce and count, produce and count".

Olga: The workload agenda has been completely counterproductive, detrimental to everything we do in education.

In these discussions about workload, time, and the 'counting' syndrome of publication, we saw how our identity as academics is developed in relation to expectations of the academy. We realise that we are not alone in experiencing this turmoil, but we thought it was significant that our conversations highlighted the connection of our individual 'selves' to the strident demands of 'publish or perish' in increasingly unstable contexts of higher education more broadly.

Fear and Pleasure (Embodiment)

We were intrigued by how much we talked through and about our emotions. Although we had earlier expressed some ambivalence about writing, and especially about writing within audit cultures, our stance on writing softened somewhat as we began to understand its power in other ways. Specifically, we marvelled at the power of communing about writing. Indeed, writing had become much more than the publication of a journal article to meet productivity outcomes. This construction of a new relationship with each other, as it were, through what some might label as a simple "data gathering" exercise, was quite startling. The following extract shows how, in seeking explanations for the effects that the push to publish in high-esteem journals is having on us, we start to look outside ourselves and direct our attention to institutional factors.

Lola: Does anyone want to talk more about writing tensions, because I think what we're talking about, really, there's so many tensions in terms of our work. So, is the key about finding a balance then, is that the answer? A balance between the tensions?

Niki: I have trouble with [the idea of] balance. It's just like taking the middle ground, and I know that's not what you mean, but I find that it doesn't fully explain what I'm experiencing or what I'm going through. So, it's not just finding that balance, because it's like saying: "You've got to have work-life balance." Okay, that's important, but it's self-evident. It doesn't actually help me to find it, if you know what I mean? Whereas, reshaping the institution, it gives me more of a sense of power, that I'm actually doing something; that I'm not a victim in all this. That I'm being proactive about my work, and about my thinking, and not just being formed or shaped into what the institution, or part of the institution, would like us to be, but forming and shaping ourselves – if that makes sense?

Olga: Yes, you're just taking control of who you are and who you want to be.

Niki: Yeah, and some days you'll have balance, and some days you won't. I'm all in favour of having meltdowns, I think they're really important.

Olga: I love a good cry.

Niki: And being vulnerable is really important, because you can't always show you're on top of things [because] one day it's just all going to crack open. So, you've got to find an outlet for your vulnerability, or for your emotions, or whatever. It takes its toll on your body, on your family, you know, and everything. And again, just going back to that thing about talking [as part of the writing group processes] it might just seem like talking, but it's [not] just talking, it's something else …. it's communing. It almost has a spiritual aspect to it … it touches parts of you that you don't always feel. It gives a sense of freedom, I think? That comes into that communication, because you're always constructing an idea, or constructing an emotion, or through language you're constructing a relationship. You're constructing, developing, maintaining a relationship. And sometimes it works really well, like I think it did with us in the writing group; and sometimes it just doesn't work well, like, in some meetings that we've attended [laughs].

Lola: I like the idea of being known, because you know how sometimes you can be with a person forever, and they don't know who you are? And yet, sometimes for your writing, and a writing group, you feel like: "Oh, this person knows who I am." It's almost like they 'see' you, and they 'know' you.

Niki: Yes, that thing: "I see you."

Lola: … and I think from being from a minority group, and we talked about this before, I feel like an outsider.

Olga: Which comes back to vulnerabilities, because you are, you're exposing a lot more of yourself than… you know [through your writing].

In this section of the conversation a number of things are happening. First we are opening up further about our fears and vulnerabilities in this writing and research space. As suggested by Smith, "the very dichotomy of body and mind relies on refusing to admit the implications of bodily presence" into what it means to be an academic writer.[9] Second, we are giving ourselves explicit permission to do this. It must be emphasised that this permission and openness to express vulnerability only came about through our working and talking together as a subgroup of the larger writing group. Third, we are beginning to push the boundaries of understanding about writing and the promise that it holds for benefits beyond being published in a high-esteem academic journal.

It was in the talking (and the laughter, asides, and jokes) that our connections to self, each other, and the institution became clearer. This constant interaction between discussions of the self and connections to the demands of the institution now leads us to an analysis of how the invisible work of writing is tied to the workings of institutional cultures, formations, and structures.

Discussion: Ruling Relations, Compliance and Pushback

In locating these tensions, have we come any closer to identifying the 'invisible' work of writing, and what significance, if any we can attach to this understanding? We see two dimensions of this invisible work. The first has to do with the invisible ruling relations of the institution, and the second unearths the invisible untold narratives of writing that support us through the pressures incited by the performative university.

Using the framing of institutional ethnography, we can see the relations of ruling evident in our material, daily practices as academics striving to publish papers in high-esteem journals. In one sense, we had become embroiled in the ruling relations of performativity the minute that we signed up for the writing Masterclass. In being offered a position in this Masterclass, as beneficial to us as it might be in terms of our own individual career progressions, we were also buying into the dominant

narratives of compliance with publishing in high-esteem journals. We then each embarked on a challenging journey over eight months, willingly joining and teaming up with university structures that supported publication, but that at the same time added significant levels of pressure on us as we engaged in the physical acts associated with writing.

As our analysed conversations have shown, this seemingly innocent act of writing brought to light strong feelings about the act of writing, self-doubt, identity, performance (*sometimes I feel used up*), rejection and affirmation, loss of the soul, retention of the soul, loneliness, sacrifice, and the effects of writing on our vulnerable bodies and emotions. We continue to grapple with the repetitive cycle of labour that requires endless performance and measurement. Our sense of self wavers between strength and feelings of being not quite "enough" as we experience a multitude of emotions. Developing out of this situation is a type of guilt that we are not performing; the guiltier we become the more we find ourselves caught within this trap of constantly striving to do better.

The writing group, and our participation in the group, thus added increasing pressure to our already busy lives, and yet we chose to stay connected in this space even though we had each experienced feelings of ambivalence and uncertainty about our own standing as academic writers in the academy. In locating the three tensions in the structural practices of the university, we came to see these tensions as fluid because, through our daily practices, and in interaction with institutional expectations, our connected everyday practices are assembled and disassembled through our writing work, and through our interactions with each other.

The act of submitting a paper for publication can be seen as an act of compliance; as academics embedded in a writing group supported by our employer we are in a sense playing the game of higher education measurement-audit cultures. So, a key feature of the conversation was in allowing insight and anger to come through, and connecting it to the push to publish every year. This links the personal to the political, and clarifies how our personal experiences, and how we express these, are entwined within institutional structures of production and annual outputs.

However, a second dimension of the invisible work of writing can be expressed in more agentic terms. The analysis of our co-constructed experiences of writing and being part of a writing group has brought to light

some significant understandings about speaking back to the pressures wreaked by the performative functions of the neoliberal university. These non-measurable outcomes, invisible over the eight-month period of the Masterclass, but certainly becoming more evident as we talked as a sub-group, included a number of unexpected discoveries. We acknowledged the power of exposing our vulnerabilities in this group. Part of this powerful experience came with the understanding that, if we had had men in the group, the level of disclosure would perhaps have been less intimate. Certainly, we agreed that if our male counterparts had been included, there would be some things left unsaid. In keeping with feminist scholarship, we found that creating a safe environment for women to share their stories could often uncover "hidden experiences so that social scientific knowledge is not based solely on the experiences of men or other privileged groups".[10]

The very act of sitting around and just 'yacking about nothing' brought its own type of freedom from institutional constraints, supported our feelings of collegiality, and strengthened our own confidence as academics. We shared laughter, we shared private details of our lives, and developed 'insider' jokes, further adding to a sense of camaraderie in the writing and reflection process. Significantly, these outcomes, if we can call them that, started with an act of compliance to university pressures to publish in high-esteem journals, an act of compliance that was then hijacked and converted into what we see as a third space of collaboration and collegiality. Were we speaking back to the narrow, technocratic measurement discourses of the neoliberal university? Perhaps we were. But we remain aware that there is always the danger that, as argued by Sutton, the "creation of this new organizational actor takes place when the technology of performativity becomes internalized: when academics come to want what is wanted from them".[11]

What Next?

Our lives continue as before. We juggle teaching, writing, research, and heavy administrative loads in our daily work. We struggle to keep writing for pleasure and for the institution, because as argued by Manathunga,

Selkrig, Sadler, and Keamy, "past achievements are increasingly linked to future workload planning so that time for research becomes progressively foreclosed if these targets are not met".[12] We perform the functions of academia, and in large part get enormous satisfaction from our work. But what has engaging in this process of writing and co-autoethnography meant for us? Making visible the work of academic writing in our context shows us that we are not separate from the structural workings of our institution, and that relations of power are entwined in our daily practices. As academics we are "directed" to write. We write and fulfil the institution's requirements, bringing value to both the institution and to ourselves. In writing for the institution, we are being compliant with an audit culture that measures academics and institutions through publications. But, as we have tried to show in this chapter, when we fulfil the directives of the audit institution we can also "peer through the cracks" and work to create spaces from which to firstly, understand how our work happens, and secondly to speak back to discourses of performativity currently permeating academic culture. As a way forward then, we take comfort in the words of Manathunga et al.:

> As neoliberal audit approaches to academic work adopt divide-and-rule strategies deliberately designed to privilege individualism and create docile, isolated subjects, just the mere act of maintaining relationality and collegiality in the measured university constitutes a significant act of resistance.[13]

Notes

1. Margaret Thornton, "Inhabiting the Neoliberal University," *Alternative Law Journal* 38 (2013) 72; Michael A. Peters, "Managerialism and the Neoliberal University," *Psychosociological Issues in Human Resource Management* 5 (2013) 15.
2. Marie L. Campbell and Marjorie L. Devault, "Dorothy E. Smith", in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists*, ed. George Ritzer and Jeffrey Stepnisky (Maiden, MA: 2011), 279.
3. Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner, "Autoethnography – An Overview," *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 1 (2011) 1.

4. Heewon Chang, Faith. W Ngunjiri and Kathy-Ann C. Hernandez, *Collaborative Autoethnography*. (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013).

5. Campbell and Devault, 281.

6. Campbell and Devault, 282.

7. Carolyn Baker, "Membership Categorization and Interview Accounts," in *Qualitative Research,* ed. David Silverman, 2nd ed. (London: Sage, 2004), 130.

8. Carolyn Baker, 163.

9. Dorothy E. Smith, "Resisting Institutional Capture as a Research Practice," in *Our Studies, Ourselves: Sociologists' Lives and Work*, ed. Barry Glassner and Rosanna Hertz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 151.

10. Amanda Burgess-Proctor, "Methodological and Ethical Issues in Feminist Research with Abused Women," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 48 (2015) 126.

11. Paul Sutton, "Lost Souls? The Demoralization of Academic Labour in the Measured University," *Higher Education Research & Development* 36 (2017) 629.

12. Catherine Manathunga et al., "Rendering the Paradoxes and Pleasures of Academic Life: Using Images, Poetry and Drama to Speak Back to the Measured University," *Higher Education Research & Development* 36 (2017) 528.

13. Manathunga et al., 530.

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12

Re-framing Literacy in Neoliberal Times: Teaching Poetry So Students Can See Through the Cracks

Mary Weaven

Introduction

Across the political spectrum, literacy is considered essential for the education of the individual and for national development. UNESCO literacy statistics 'are considered the standard for benchmarking progress globally.'[1] Yet, as Myhill notes, 'Curiously, given the widespread international consensus on the importance of literacy, definitions of literacy are less than clear about what it is.'[2] A perceived uncertainty about definitions of literacy has created space for neoliberal governments to promote narrow, skills-focussed approaches to literacy which are often at odds with the understanding of literacy embraced by professionals and practitioners who work actively in the field of literacy education and teacher education. These different understandings of literacy are starkly evident in the recent national requirement for Australian Pre-service Teachers (PSTs) to pass the new Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education

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Students (LANTITE) prior to gaining registration to teach. They are also present in the Australian testing regime aimed at primary and secondary students—the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

In our final Master of Teaching 'Secondary English' class for the year, this topic, linked as it is to educational philosophy, was energetically discussed in connection with a quotation from Canadian literary critic, Northrop Frye: '… the aim of teaching a child to write poetry is not to produce poets, but to produce articulate people, articulateness being the highest form of freedom that society can give to the individual.'[3] NAPLAN and LANTITE have no interest in producing articulate people; their aims are quite different.

In this chapter, I argue that the teaching of poetry creates a special place in the teacher education curriculum for encouraging students to see through the cracks in neoliberal logic and ensure that 'the light gets in'. I draw upon Lakoff's framing theory about the role of values and public debate in education to make a case for engaging preservice teachers in debates that challenge neoliberal narrow and technical understandings of literacy.[4] I adopt a Freirean (1970) understanding of literacy as praxis that highlights the significant political dimensions and operations of power evident in literacy.[5] While noting that spoken poetry is a field that has gained recent popularity—'Slam Poetry', according to Williamson (2015) 'has garnered a massive global following'—the focus here is on forms of published poetry that are available for study in schools and are often officially endorsed by curriculum authorities.[6] I argue that analysis of these officially endorsed forms of poetry in the preservice classroom can be transformed into opportunities to encourage students to see through the cracks of neoliberalism.

Thought Is Born Through Words

How we understand literacy has a central bearing on how we view education. This is partly because of our complex and varied relationship with language and it is also because, without fluent language, our thinking processes are limited and our capacity to learn is truncated. Our

relationship with language can be pleasurable and empowering, but it can also be distant and painful. Quoting from the Russian poet, Niklay Gumilev, Vygotsky reminds us that, '[T]he relation between thought and word is a living process; thought is born through words. A word devoid of thought is a dead thing… and like bees in the deserted hive. The dead words have a rotten smell.'[7]

We learn about language through language. Our facility with language opens doors to further learning. Language can transport us to different realms, can inform us, can enhance our knowledge of ourselves on a broad and an intimate scale, and through language we can deepen and challenge our concepts of the workings of the wider world.

Poetry is a literary art form consisting solely of language. Every image created in a poem relies entirely on words for its impact; every feeling conveyed has only words as a conduit. Language is the essence of poetry. The sort of literacy experience gained through the study of poetry is built on an engagement with language that acknowledges the aesthetic possibilities of words as well as the connection between words and thought.[8] What one person might think about a poem is often quite different from what another might think. A variety of interpretations is not only possible, it is to be expected whenever we deal with complex issues. Thus, as a form of literacy-in-action, poetry allows us to learn about each other's thoughts and feelings, and to share our beliefs about the world. Poetry, according to Australian researchers Kroll and Evans:

> stimulates the intellect and imagination; it is a site of linguistic complexity that both hones our verbal skills and generates aesthetic pleasure. As well, to stay vibrant and engaged, poetry needs to be remade for each generation, each culture.[9]

If Kroll and Evans are correct, then poetry serves not only an academic purpose, but also provides a broader cultural benefit. For Hanratty, an Irish researcher, poetry is central to the English curriculum, and essential to education because it 'has a radical, and even subversive, role to play in an increasingly examination-driven educational culture.'[10] The *Motion Report* from the United Kingdom is even more embracing, claiming that:

> [poetry is] an expression of our primitively human delight in rhythms, sounds and patterns, and also of our sophisticated need for ingenuity. It is the form that puts us most deeply in touch with ourselves – that introduces us to ourselves – while it also connects us with the wider world, and helps us to prove our sense of the numinous.[11]

Reading and experiencing poetry provides opportunities to discuss the things that matter most to us as humans. Writing poetry allows for the creation of new possibilities with ideas, emotions and ideology.[12] It stands to reason, however, that our capacity to write poetry will be enhanced by familiarity with the poetry that already exists in the field. The nursery rhymes offered to young children are an early form of engagement with language through poetry. This engagement can continue well beyond nursery rhymes as our understanding of the world develops throughout adolescence and adulthood.

Yet all is not well with poetry. As neoliberalism has gained momentum, poetry, it appears, has fallen from favour. Kroll and Evans observe that poetry occupies a 'precarious status in contemporary culture.'[13] 'Poetry', according to Christensen, 'has in recent decades done so poorly that many literary critics now openly speak of poetry as dying, dead, or in decay.'[14] In the school setting, Dias reports that 'in many schools hardly any poetry is read and/or given serious study.'[15] This, he suggests is due to 'a lack of correspondence between public assertions about poetry as a cultural value and how poetry is generally regarded and taught in schools.'[16]

If we are to nurture the possibilities of poetry as a vehicle to facilitate a critique of and resistance to neoliberalism, then its general decline from favour needs to be acknowledged. Recognising the radical political potential of poetry is one way to address declining interest in the teaching of poetry. As poet and Pulitzer Prize winner, Alice Walker tells us: 'Poetry is the lifeblood of rebellion, revolution and the raising of consciousness. And it is the raising of consciousness that is the most effective way to ensure lasting change.'[17]

As educators, when we advocate for the teaching of poetry we are implicitly referring to the purpose of education and the pedagogical connection between teachers and students. In discussing the relationship

between teaching and learning, and in considering problems with regard to the language of learning, educational philosopher Gert Biesta claims that 'a language of education always needs to pay attention to questions of content, purpose and relationships.'[18] He reflects that this is an era where either these questions are no longer asked, or they are already taken to be answered. He asserts that:

> education is always about the transmission and acquisition of some content (knowledge, skills, dispositions), but always also 'connects' students to particular traditions and ways of doing and being and, in addition, has an impact on their formation as a person (either positively, for example by giving them knowledge, skills and connections to networks that empower them, or negatively when, for example, they are being told to 'know their place').[19]

Because 'content, purpose and relationship', as Biesta notes, underpin classroom activity it is worth thinking about how poetry contributes to the broader goals of education.[20] We can then build on this understanding to develop strategies to promote pedagogies for connecting students with poetry. What, in other words, is the purpose of teaching poetry, and how might this assist in gaining a deeper understanding of the workings of neoliberalism and ultimately in resisting its anti-educational trajectory?

Poetry is a highly condensed and intense form of expression. A novelist or playwright has a much broader canvas; a short story writer has thousands of words at her disposal. In the classroom we're not likely to ask students to write novels, rarely plays, and only occasionally short stories. But poems are a distinct possibility. It follows that if we would like our students to occasionally write poetry, then to do it well they will need to study published poems that are recognised as being exemplars in the genre.

If students are not offered the opportunity to engage with poetry, then their avenues for expression are reduced. In particular, they are being deprived of the chance to work with one of our most powerful and culturally laden forms of language. Interacting with poetry has personal, political and social ramifications.[21] We are diminished as a society because

of our neglect of poetry. Any concept of literacy that does not include poetry is operating on an impoverished platform because it is failing to pay attention to our most intense form of literary expression.[22]

Neoliberal Approaches to Literacy

Neoliberal governments across the globe have made use of what Myhill has noted as 'a less than clear' definition of literacy.[23] The Australian National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is a testing regime aimed at primary and secondary students. The Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students (LANTITE) is a recently introduced test designed 'to assess those aspects of initial teacher education students' personal literacy and numeracy skills that can be measured through an online assessment tool (ACER 2017).'[24] Designed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)—an official partner of UNESCO, as we learn on the ACER website—the LANTITE avoids the agentic nuances of literacy by focussing instead only on that 'which can be measured through an online assessment tool'. The ubiquitous nature of neoliberal influence could not be made clearer.

Literacy in the NAPLAN is reduced to three components: 1. 'language conventions' with a heavy emphasis on spelling; 2. 'reading' where the emphasis is on 'shade in the bubble' multiple choice responses to comprehension questions; and 3. a 'writing prompt'. Apart from offering trite instructions such as: 'write in sentences; pay attention to your spelling and punctuation; use paragraphs to organise your ideas', no direction is given to students as to how they will be assessed on the writing prompt task. The writing prompt does not divulge the criteria that will be used to assess the written work. If the other two components of the test are any indication, however, it is very likely that assessors will focus on the more mechanical, easily measured aspect of language. 'A demonstration of complexity of thought', for example, is absent from the instructions. It is possible to measure spelling; 'complex thought' is a little more elusive.

The promotion of narrow, skills-focussed approaches to literacy that we see in NAPLAN's emphasis on readily measurable student responses is at odds with the understanding of literacy embraced by professionals

and practitioners who work actively in the field of literacy education and teacher education. Working not so much as isolated individuals but as committed professionals in communities or networks, Australian teachers, teacher educators and professional associations have, according to Parr et al., engaged with, and in some cases spoken back to, these standards-based reform trends.[25]

English Teachers' Reaction to Neoliberal Literacy Agendas

The reaction of English teachers to shifts in literacy policy has, for some time, suggested a growing concern with neoliberal directions. Moss notes: 'In recent times, and in many different jurisdictions, policy-makers have begun to exert much more direct influence over educational practice than once would have been the case. Literacy policy commonly stands centre stage in this process.'[26] Goodwyn's early warnings of English teachers' misgivings about the role of 'literacy' in the teaching of English have been developed more recently by Brass.[27] Brass provides a detailed examination of the shifting role of 'literacy' in the teaching of English. He draws on Lankshear and Knobel to note that 'In the 1980s and 1990s, much of the educational language associated with texts changed from the terms "reading" and "writing" to "literacy."'[28] With Green, Brass goes on to suggest that 'the rise of "literacy" as a governing frame for research, teaching, and teacher education constituted a more fundamental discursive break away, that spawned a range of multidisciplinary frameworks of English language arts—if not ushered in a new paradigm of English-as-literacy.'[29]

In referring to the discrediting of 'expansive views of literacy education', Brass identifies the extent to which a narrowing down of the concepts of literacy have defined the way in which 'neoliberal policies have privileged instrumentalist notions of teaching and teacher education.'[30] He notes that 'The neoliberal era in teacher education has structured key barriers and seldom more than "small openings" to engage in critical work with preservice and inservice teachers.'[31]

Instead, I argue that adopting a Freirean understanding of literacy as praxis Freire offers English teachers a theoretical construct that foregrounds the role of politics and power in literacy education.[32] For Freire, literacy 'is an eminently political phenomenon, and it must be analyzed within the context of a theory of power relations and an understanding of social and cultural reproduction and production.'[33] Freire is explicit about this: 'For the notion of literacy to become meaningful it has to be situated within a theory of cultural production and viewed as an integral part of the way in which people produce, transform, and reproduce meaning.'[34] Literacy is not something we have done to us, nor is it something that as teachers or teacher-educators we 'do' to our students; rather it is a medium through which we learn about the world and through which we learn to act upon the world. I also suggest that Lakoff's framing theory which explores the centrality of values in education offers English teachers practical mechanisms to generate spaces of public debate. Ongoing public debate, according to Lakoff's framing theory, is required to seriously challenge neoliberalism.[35] In the English classroom, and in the preservice education of English teachers, we can begin this debate, and we can do so through the discussion of poetry. Lakoff claims that 'it is difficult to say things that you are not sure the public is ready to hear, to say things that have not been said hundreds of times before.'[36] A classroom environment provides an ideal setting for this debate to be rehearsed. In responding to a poem, we seek to value the opinion of all who are involved in the process. There is never one 'right' way to understand what a poet is saying, and the best approach is one where students are encouraged to develop and share their own well-considered interpretation of the words on the page.[37]

Poetry Speaks Back to Neoliberalism: 'You Do This to Empty the Heart'

In order to illustrate how critical debate about neoliberalism can be facilitated through the teaching of officially endorsed Australian poetry, I have selected two examples of Gwen Harwood's poetry—'The Spelling Prize'

and 'Father and Child: Barn Owl'. These poems poignantly display the shortfalls of neoliberal thinking. Gwen Harwood is an Australian poet whose work has for many years been offered by state education authorities to students in senior English classes in Australian schools. In officially endorsed curriculum documents Harwood's poetry currently sits alongside John Donne, John Keats and T. S. Eliot as an example of literary work suitable for study because it is 'seen as having personal, social, cultural and aesthetic value and potential for enriching students' scope of experience.'[38] These poems also demonstrate the capacity for poetry to make space to develop and explore the complexities of students' literary responses, and the difficulty of trying to confine this activity to a limited definition of 'literacy'. Both of these poems focus on events that occurred while the poet was a child, perhaps a few years younger than the students who now read them.

The first of these poems, 'The Spelling Prize' makes explicit the emptiness and inequity of a competitive school system where literacy is reduced to proficiency in spelling. The line, 'You do this to empty the heart' powerfully evokes the eviscerating impact of spelling quizzes while pointing more broadly towards all gratuitous forms of assessment favoured so enthusiastically by neoliberal approaches to education. The second poem, 'Father and Child: Barn Owl', reflects on the often-unwitting brutality exhibited by children when they succumb to the urge to wield power instead of coexisting in harmony. This is a poem that reminds us that although children have agency, they also need to develop the wisdom that will lead them beyond the ruthlessness of physical domination.

'The Spelling Prize'

'The Spelling Prize' is a poem which ostensibly recounts a school spelling competition that Harwood won as a child. In responding to this poem, we are drawn to think about the purpose of competition and of its tenuous connection with education. We are also led to consider the importance of spelling in the overall workings of literacy. On one level, 'The Spelling Prize' could be seen as a comment on the inadvisability of reducing literacy to the correct spelling of one word in a competition. On a deeper

level, this poem addresses issues of social justice. Harwood tells us in this poem that, although she won the spelling prize, she knew at the time, as did her classmates, that the rightful winner was Ella. Ella needed the prize; Harwood did not. Ella's mother had just given birth to her ninth baby, and the family was reliant on neighbours for assistance. It was Ella's father who killed the calf in the extract below, and her brothers who showed their guest, Harwood, how they pumped the forelegs of the slaughtered animal to 'empty the heart'. Images of competition, cruelty, poverty and brutality pervade this poem. To compete for the prize, the children:

> stood on the wooden forms
> That seated four in discomfort.
> When you missed your word, you sat down
> And wrote it out twenty times.

We are reminded in this poem that for every winner in a competitive system, there must be many losers. And even for the winner, if she has a social conscience, there are regrets. A week before the spelling competition Harwood and her grandmother had visited Ella's home to take a shawl for the new baby. The shawl had belonged to Harwood's little brother and the gift formed a new link between Ella and the young Harwood. During the visit, Ella took her guest to watch the slaughter of a calf. The slaughter was conducted by the male members of Ella's family:

> One of her brothers pumped the forelegs:
> "You do this to empty the heart"
>
> The father severed the head, and set it
> aside on a bench where the eyes, still trusting,
> looked back at what had become
> of the world. (Harwood, Gwen, 'The Spelling Prize')

These few lines alone provide rich material for discussion on the heart-lessness of a system that allows the privileged to win prizes that they

neither need not want, while those who suffer are subjected to further pain and humiliation. In her poem Harwood notes that, as a child, she could have let Ella win, 'but did not, and sixty years/ can't change it;'. The connection formed by the grandmother's gift was 'severed' by a competition that clearly favours those with cultural capital. The final spelling word was 'mystic'. As Harwood notes in the second last stanza of the poem, this was: 'a word never found in our Readers'. Harwood knew the word; Ella did not. Harwood belonged to a family where books and reading were commonplace; Ella belonged to a family 'where nobody owned a corner, a space they might call their own'. Here Harwood points directly and starkly at the ways in which inequalities in life are replicated in an unfair education system. For educators and teacher educators, here is a poem that opens up discussion of matters that bear unambiguously on the way we live our lives. This poem provides us the opportunity to critically explore with students what it means to be a citizen and a human being, and the crucial role that education plays in this process.

'Father and Child: Barn Owl'

'Father and Child: Barn Owl' is the first part of a longer poem that concludes a selection of Harwood's works published between 1969 and 1974. This particular poem was included in a collection of Harwood's poems most recently offered for study to Year 12 English students in the Australian state of Victoria in 2015. As with 'The Spelling Prize', this poem draws on an experience from Harwood's childhood, growing up on a farm where some old stables housed a barn owl. At daybreak, with her father still asleep, 'the old No-Sayer robbed of power by sleep', Harwood creeps out 'with my father's gun' and shoots at the owl.

> My first shot struck. He swayed,
> ruined, beating his only
> wing, as I watched, afraid
> by the fallen gun, a lonely
> child who believed death clean
> and final not this obscene

> bundle of stuff that dropped,
> and dribbled through loose straw
> tangling in bowels, and hopped
> blindly closer.

Very few of us are likely to have seen an owl in the wild, and hopefully even fewer would be inclined to shoot one, yet the owl remains a potent symbol in our culture representing wisdom, knowledge and intelligence. Harwood's poem reminds us that the absence of wisdom, ignorance—'a child who believed death clean and final'—can lead to unimagined horror: 'this obscene bundle of stuff'. Woken by the gun-shot, her father arrives to see what has happened. He hands his daughter the fallen gun and instructs her to: "End what you have begun". She shoots again and kills the bird. The struggle between knowledge and ignorance forms a central thread in 'Father and Child: Barn Owl'.

Teaching Poetry So Students Can See Through the Cracks

When teacher educators include discussions of officially endorsed poetry in their classrooms, such as the poems of Gwen Harwood featured above, they invite preservice teachers to consider the very purpose of education both within a neoliberal environment, and to imagine possibilities beyond. This is the type of critical social analysis that, according to Biesta, leads to an essential 'formation as a person'.[39] The new paradigm of 'English-as-literacy' does not allow space for reflective formation of persons, nor for the development of critical thinking and analysis about what it means to be a citizen and a human being.[40] When we read a poem with students for the purpose of engaging in philosophical discussion, we are in effect entering into a dynamic open-ended learning experience that cannot be pre-set and defies measurement. For Freire, this dynamic movement between reading, reflecting and acting is central to literacy— 'Reading critically is absolutely fundamental and important.'[41]

The purpose of discussing poetry with students is, as Northrop Frye claims, 'not to produce poets, but to produce articulate people, articu-

lateness being the highest form of freedom that society can give to the individual.'[42] If this articulateness leads to public debate about significant forces in our lives such as democracy, social justice and neoliberalism, then education will be doing its job, and poetry will be fulfilling its capacity to produce articulate people who can engage in fruitful social critique. The Freirean concept of literacy, as a medium for acting upon the world, can be realized through the study of poetry when this study is allowed to promote critical reflection on philosophical and practical matters; in short, on our way of life. For Freire, literacy is reading the word and the world

> The act of reading cannot be explained as merely reading words since every act of reading words implies a previous reading of the world and a subsequent rereading of the world. There is a permanent movement back and forth between "reading" reality and reading words.[43]

Picking up on that evocative line from Harwood's poem, to truly 'empty the heart' of literacy, neoliberalism has focussed on the most mechanical aspects of a complex and crucial human faculty and has presented these aspects as though they were the full story. Literacy goes beyond 'shade in the bubble' tests. Literacy involves acting on the world and shaping it towards being a better place for everyone, not just those who pass spelling and comprehension tests. As standards-based measurement and narrow functional, mechanical definitions of literacy dominate our schools and universities, spaces to discuss and reflect on poetry have been diminished. This chapter suggests that the teaching of poetry can act subversively to provide opportunities to think seriously about not only the issues that form the focus of the poem but more widely to debate the things that matter most to us as humans.

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13

Revitalising Teacher Education Through Feminist Praxis: A Reflection on Challenging Systems of Patriarchy, Class and Colonialism

Claire Kelly

Introduction

In higher education, management discourses about 'quality' learning and teaching have focussed on quality assurance for accountability rather than substantive quality for enriching individual, professional and community life. In Australia, as elsewhere, this focus on accountability emerged from higher education's corporatisation, based on principles of new managerialism and a neoliberal faith in the market as the mechanism to 'distribute' educational provision.[1] Feminist praxis is concerned with social justice and is explicitly resistant to corporate managerialism while embracing of community engagement and the inclusion of those not recognised as important and powerful by the 'mainstream'. However, in the contemporary context of teacher education, there are substantial challenges to this work of engagement and inclusion, as academics must negotiate the external regulatory requirements of teacher registration authorities as well as internal regimes of work allocations and accountabilities. Consistent

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features of these external and internal regimes are a narrow focus on developing students' (pre-service teachers) employability skills, leaving a focus on praxis and the critical reflection, relationships and social action that are integral to it vulnerable to erasure.[2]

However, feminists in the school and tertiary education sectors have continued to resist this neoliberal logic and, in this chapter, it is argued that in the academy today feminist praxis offers opportunities to challenge neoliberal attempts to seal the cracks that we thought we had prised open during the second wave of feminism.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of my approach to feminist praxis. This is followed by several small stories, providing an overview of the emerging policy and practice of feminist teachers in the 1970s, based on my own experiences and thinking, particularly through the work of the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA) Women's Committee (later the Elimination of Sexism committee). It is a reflective piece that traces scenes of a career trajectory from teaching to teacher education, with a focus on curriculum content and pedagogies and industrial policies and practices developed by feminist teachers in the 1970s and 1980s. The aim is to explore how this work challenged the exclusion of women from historical and contemporary narratives and espoused and implemented equity polices for girls and women. The work undertaken is not the sole focus, however. An equally important thread to the storyline of feminist praxis is the solidarities embodied in this work. Reflecting on this historical-biography I ask, what can we learn from such feminist praxis to inspire current attempts to revitalise university teacher education? In the final section of the chapter I offer a reflection on how historical activism enters into the teacher education classroom and connects systemically with students' concerns and the neoliberal ethos shaping our work in teaching and teacher education.

Feminist Praxis

My understanding of feminist praxis is resonant with Roach Pierson's approach, with an emphasis on fostering "critical awareness of a sex/gender system that relegates power and autonomy to men and dependence

and subordination to women [and is] politicized by the experience of women in pursuit of self-determination coming into conflict with a sex-gender system of male dominance."[3] In feminist praxis, this system articulates ruling relations as "a fundamental organizing principle of society" (ibid.)[4] As such, it ought to take a central place in teacher education. Additionally, Roach Pierson argues for bringing historical perspectives on women's education to the development of feminist pedagogy.

Challenging systems of patriarchy, class and colonialism have been, and need to continue to be at the centre of radical feminist praxis. Feminist praxis offers educators the opportunity to empower learners to understand and take action which 'activates the present, making the force for experimenting with its possibilities.'[5] Blackmore suggests that theorising social justice has been at the core of feminist praxis around issues of equity and access in education as well as in society and the economy.[6] Indeed, for feminists, she says, "research is praxis, in that theory and practice are interconnected, and that any distinctions between theory/methodology/method are false."[7]

Feminists in the school and tertiary education sectors in Australia have long been involved in debates and activism in the domains of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation for improvement. We saw these domains as critical to our students' learning, to our research and to transforming the world in the interests of the women and girls and other subjugated peoples, opposing the dominant exclusive culture of the ruling class. The intersections of patriarchy, class and colonialism are sites where neoliberalism can be examined and resisted. As Blackmore notes, feminist academics have existed within/against dominant cultures' ways of being and knowing both constrained by the strictures imposed by patriarchal, class and colonial paradigms and actively resisting those paradigms in teaching and research.[8] Women's presence in academia and in early childhood, primary and secondary education, has challenged dominant ontologies, epistemologies and practices, by not only including women as subjects as well as objects of research, but through the feminist ambition to make education more inclusive and representative of the social and economic life world.[9] This activism from within sought to recognise women's experience in ways that were more democratic, ethical and empowering for students, teachers and academics.[10]

Feminist Praxis in Teaching

Feminist praxis, rather than remaining an "abstraction, and novelty and insensitivity to local conditions" particularly in the school sector, aims to "produce change and not just armchair critique."[11] It is collaborative and situated in the socio-cultural context of students and their communities. This meant using strategies where students could engage in meaningful research with those communities. This focus followed from our understanding of the lack of inclusion of women's experience and knowledge in policies and practices such as access to promotion and child care, and in the stories of history, philosophy, science, art, cultural and community life. It is a story of activism and solidarity.

In Australia, reform which challenged central, bureaucratic control of teachers and schools began in the Victorian education system in 1966 with the establishment of the Curriculum Advisory Board which included teachers and parents as well as Departmental officials. The emphasis was on providing a universal secondary education to cater for all students between the ages of eleven and fifteen, to encourage independence in students and for learning to be thought of as a co-operative, not authoritarian.[12] This movement towards 'democratic curriculum' was embraced enthusiastically by the new wave of young female teachers who came into the school system from the late 1960s onwards. Their entry to the profession was part of the massive post-war expansion of secondary education and a push at state and federal level towards widening access of disadvantaged groups to education, including women's access to higher education and the professions.[13] In 1970, I was able to attend university on an Education Department-funded teaching scholarship, which opened up the possibility of training and employment for students from beyond the private schooling system.

Boys Are Strong, Like King Kong; Girls Are Weak, Chuck Them in the Creek

This rhyme, chanted so often in school yards of the fifties and sixties, well describes attitudes to girls and women in the period prior to the radical

changes of the 1970s. During my own high school education in the 1960s, my dreams to become a veterinarian or a geologist were dashed by the careers teacher and by the spoken and enacted assumptions of the education system, teachers, male students and society, which taught girls we not capable of being, for example, builders labourers, surgeons, footballers or judges. These were still the days when the girls in my class were timetabled into home economics while the boys did woodwork and we did sewing when the boys did metalwork. As Weaver-Hightower and Skelton argue, in this period school experience was highly differentiated by gender. There was "explicit segregation" in access to subject offerings and, similarly, the "hidden curriculum" was also highly gendered and sexist. This included everything "from what and who were left out of lessons, who was called on in class and how, who was disciplined and how, and even how students interacted in the lunchroom or the playground". These were the patriarchal structured "realities and possibilities of schooling for students and educators".[14]

Resisting Official Curriculum

Examining elements of patriarchy and class in schools and society were aspects of feminist teachers' resistance to the official curriculum in the 1970s which were tackled with enthusiasm. We brought the role of workers and community activists to establishing democratic curriculum, emphasising the hitherto mostly unrecognised role of women in all aspects of education and society and across all curriculum areas. For example, the aims of the McClintock Collective in science education drew on critique of male dominated science and conceptions of science to interrogate gendered assumptions and interests in official curriculum and textbooks. The Collective worked toward several aims:

1. To raise awareness of the issues among teachers and the wider educational community;
2. To disseminate non-sexist science resources;
3. To examine curriculum materials for their non-sexist value and to give appropriate feedback to publishers and users;

4. To act as science consultants from primary to tertiary level;
5. To undertake in-service activities for teachers on new ways to present science to include girls;
6. To challenge society's stereotypical views of science;
7. To support each other in our personal efforts to change how we teach.[15]

It was through such collective work that teachers forged important connections with feminist colleagues in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Teachers made important contributions to the development of feminist theory and research in academia and many of these feminist teachers have continued working in schools and in the teacher unions, which continue to sustain a strong membership base for ongoing resistance to exclusive curriculum and restrictive administration policies. Many teachers also went on to become academics and to bring to tertiary education ways of seeing and knowing that had been forged in the crucible of the women's liberation movement.

The understanding of and resistance to Colonialism was more difficult to bring to the classroom, for reasons including lack of knowledge and lack of direct contact with Indigenous representatives. While Gale's *Women's Role in Aboriginal Society*[16] was available and numerous feminist journals such as *Vashti's Voice*, the quarterly publication of the Melbourne Women's Liberation Movement (1972–81), *Hecate* (1975–), *Refractory Girl* (1975–1992) and *Scarlet Woman* (1975–1992) included Indigenous women's concerns, the great wealth of resources for teachers and teacher educators by Indigenous[17] and non-Indigenous educators were yet to be written.[18] In my own high school teaching in the late 1970s I mainly relied on resources through activist networks and brought them into the classroom; for example, we discussed Land Rights in my Politics class and included the Aboriginal Legal Service among the organisations where students could conduct research by attending meetings and interviewing members to report back to their classmates. The teacher unions established policies that supported the eventual adoption by the Commonwealth of the *National Aboriginal Education Policy* in 1989. However, the take-up of these policies and practices in schools was slow and uneven.[19]

Teacher Education and Women's Liberation: Empathy, Courage and Solidarity

My studies in history, politics and teacher education were as much embedded in the Women's Liberation movement as they were in formal education. When I began my university studies in history and politics in 1970, the Women's Liberation Movement was gathering momentum. To me, and many of my colleagues in education, the Women's Liberation Movement meant consciousness-raising discussions, planning campaigns and marching on the streets, shared households, usually including children, reading, writing and agitating against discrimination wherever we found it – as well as becoming immersed in musical, artistic and theatre celebrations of women's existence, resistance and strength.[20] The Australian Broadcasting Commission's *Coming Out Show* radio program was a not to be missed part of every Saturday afternoon at 5 pm for more than twenty years from 1975. We read many old and new explorations of power and resistance, including the first book I purchased at the university bookshop, not because it was on any reading list but because the title was stunning to a non-Indigenous woman who had been given no access to such ideas during her primary and secondary schooling: Fay Gale's *Woman's role in Aboriginal society* (1970). Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970), Alexandra Kollontai's *Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman* (1926/1971), Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970) Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* (1935/1971) and Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972) were among other texts that offered powerful insights into the values and experiences of empathy, courage and solidarity which became embedded in our determination to be part of creating a more socially just world.[21] Gale's investigation, in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, of the lives of people forced on to 'reserves' such as Coranderrk near Healesville, was illuminating, particularly the following example of the resistance of the girls to attempted cultural genocide:

> In 1880 the dormitory girls at Coranderrk shocked the manager by conducting their own strike: 'For many weeks past elder girls have positively refused to obey the Matron or work, saying they would if paid wages – they

have prompted the orphan house boys to disregard my instructions and encouraged them to rebel'. (Board of Protection of the Aborigines Archives, 31 May 1880)[22]

Stories of girls and women's lives were windows into ways of knowing and seeing that we had little exposure to in our primary and secondary schooling. We were determined that such stories would be part of the learning in the classrooms when we were teachers. We had had sparse knowledge of those who had gone before us, activists such as Vida Goldstein and Muriel Heaghney, let alone Indigenous leaders such as Geraldine Briggs, Margaret Tucker and Pearl Gibbs, to name but a few. The stories of these leaders were not included in mainstream school curricula. We were determined to change that, to include "the cultural, historical and subjective contexts that frame and make possible educational projects – biographically and collectively."[23]

After completing my university studies, I worked for eight years in a state secondary school in the north-western working-class suburbs of Melbourne. I was faced with classes of thirty history students where the set texts were uninspiring and unconnected to the students' lives and concerns. The books in the school library were often uninteresting and frequently inaccurate, e.g., 'Australia was discovered in 1770'; and predominantly androcentric. I did develop a great relationship with the school librarian, who was excited to find a colleague who was keen to make recommendations about library acquisitions. We developed a shared understanding of the impoverishment of girls' education and ensured they would have access to feminist texts.[24] Forty years later I continue to remind my pre-service teaching students that a good relationship with their school librarian is a satisfying and influential (and possibly political) relationship to cultivate.

Unions Are for Women Too

This was the slogan, on badges and policy proposals that we brought to our industrial organisations. We knew that our unions were powerful and representative and that they could, with membership insistence – and

finally did – support feminist workers' demands. It was a battle which has been substantially successful in union movements, but it did take courage and solidarity between women across the union movement. The women's movement provided an ideological base for contesting the "systemic disadvantages under which female teachers worked…. to expose the constructions of masculinity and femininity…. to ensure equal opportunity for female teachers and their female students with some success."[25]

As feminist unionists we organised within Committees and stood for leadership positions. I was elected annually by the membership to represent the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA) on the Victorian Trades Hall Council for ten years and eventually became VSTA Vice-President, from the organised and recognised base of the Elimination of Sexism Committee, which developed many curriculum and industrial initiatives. We did not focus on the idea of intrinsic feminine characteristics – girls' styles of learning. Rather our approach to curriculum reform sought to include the experiences and values of previously excluded and marginalised groups, specifically girls and students from working-class and ethnic minority backgrounds and the beginnings of connections with Indigenous education.[26] The Elimination of Sexism union journal *Ms Muffet* (1979–1990) published articles on curriculum and industrial issues focussing on women and girls.[27] Kenway and Willis analyse a number of feminist strategies, for educational change during the 1970s and 1980s, whereby girls "learn to be 'critically resistant' readers of themselves, their experiences and their socio-cultural environment", rather than "passive victims of negative stereotyping."[28]

Feminist teachers at Exhibition Girls High School and Malvern Girls High School, part of a larger group of schools supported by the VSTA, The Schools Year Twelve and Tertiary Entrance (STC) group, implemented learning, teaching and assessment which focussed on students' problem-solving skills, planning of activities and maximum participation in collaborative, non-competitive learning where student differences and different experiences were valued "as a resource…. thus changing students' views of themselves and their ability to exercise control and power over their learning and their lives".[29]

Health and Human Relations

We were determined to change what was offered to students, influenced by our understanding that 'the personal is political', which we understood in terms of girls' and women's experiences and inspired empathy and solidarity. Health and Human Relations (HHR) education became one of the battlegrounds, in a curriculum that failed to respond to the needs and wishes of the students, where no subject looked directly at the lives of young people, at sex and sexism, relationships and respect. In my own and other schools, particularly where members of the Elimination of Sexism in Education and the Homosexuality sub-committees of the VSTA were working, we decided to heed our students' requests and implement HHR. We developed resources and activities to engage young people on issues such as sexuality, self-defence, nutrition and contraception. Government and Education Department reactions regarding this initiative were negative. The assistant Minister of Education in the conservative Liberal/National government of the day advised that he would issue 'lawful instructions' (failure to obey such instructions meant dismissal) to any teachers implementing such education in Victorian schools. The VSTA surveyed members and found widespread support for and implementation of HHR in schools across the State. Members and supporters of the Elimination of Sexism sub-committee, often with parent organisations' representatives, visited schools and community meetings in city and country regions. The official parents' organisations were in support of HHR Education being introduced into High Schools. The Minister called an Advisory Committee together, chaired by a matriarch of the Liberal Party, Dame Phyllis Frost. I was the teacher representative on the Committee. To the Minister's consternation, the Committee heard from parents and teacher representatives, and from Dame Phyllis herself, that there was strong support for the initiative in schools and the community. So we were able to implement Health and Human Relations Education across Victoria.[30]

In response to discussions with girls in my secondary classes I developed a related program, self-defence for girls, which combined physical education with investigations of the socio-cultural aspects of the lives of women and girls and feminist resistance in their local and world-wide communities.

As well as HHR we worked on inclusive curriculum (at the time referring to the exclusion/inclusion of girls and women across the curriculum) with ground-breaking work in schools leading to state-wide initiatives such as the Participation and Equity Program and the McClintock Collective (1987).[31] We also campaigned for child care, Family Leave (not maternity leave, knowing that challenging traditional family roles was crucial to breaking down the limitations placed on women's workforce participation and promotion), permanency, part-time work (to allow family responsibilities and paid work to be shared), superannuation, affirmative action, sexual harassment and trade union training.

We understood the importance of challenging the way women were represented in the media. An anti-rape campaign was organised by a group of feminist women living in inner Melbourne, in response to the media portrayal of the two women who were killed in the Easey Street rape/murders in 1977. The campaign needed money for publicity and the Teacher Unions Executive agreed, in response to members' requests, to pay for 30,000 leaflets to advertise the issue and the demonstration to be held in protest.[32] Our slogan was 'Rape: the end of every wolf-whistle'. The campaign received widespread recognition and has echoes across many fields of domestic and public life, in Australia and globally, including in contemporary campaigns such as the #MeToo movement.[33] Another project came to fruition in 1984. We gained funding for the production of a book of interviews with sixty women teachers. When we advertised the Saturday afternoon planning meeting to develop the details for the project, two hundred women members turned up to participate in the discussion and decisions about the book, *The Done Thing*.[34]

Feminist teacher unionists lobbied for their unions to join the trade union movement's peak bodies, maintaining our unity in the face of initial lack of enthusiasm from the leadership for some years. We sent resolutions from our rank and file branches to decision-making forums even while the leaderships of the three unions (primary secondary and technical teachers), for a long period before amalgamation into the Australian Education Union, found it impossible to come together. Feminist teachers found common ground with other feminist unionists in organisations

such as the 'white collar' Australian Council of Salaried & Professional Associations (ACSPA), particularly through ACSPA's Working Women's Centre, both of which became part of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) via amalgamation in 1979. We supported women's activism in affiliated unions and produced research papers and programs such as the Register of Women in non-traditional jobs, which visited school classrooms and other workplaces. The Secondary (VSTA) and Technical (TTUV) teacher unions (later joining with the Primary Teachers Union to become the Victorian Branch of the Australian Education Union) were members of the Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) and I was amongst VTHC members elected by Council to the first Women's Committee in 1978. We developed policies, for example, on child care, equal pay and superannuation for the VTHC and the ACTU Women's Charters.[35] "Adopting the Charter was both a symbol of solidarity with other women trade unionists and also a concrete expression of policies the Women's sub-committee felt strongly should be embraced by their union."[36]

Feminist Praxis in Teacher Education

Coming into teacher education after many years in teaching and activist work, I have drawn on this history-biography, the collective experience of courage and solidarity in challenging elements of patriarchy, class and colonialism. In my current workplace, Victoria University (VU), Melbourne, I have been able to make important feminist connections and participate in epistemological debates about pedagogies for teacher education. Recognition of the importance of friendships and solidarity to the ways of knowing of feminist praxis has supported the creation of spaces for ongoing discussion, developing theory and practice. The Praxis Inquiry (PI) Protocol used as a methodological framework to support VU pre-service teachers to formulate and explore questions about their work with students in their school placements focuses not just on 'technical' (employability) aspects of teachers' work but also on ontological and epistemological questions:

- The ontological task: Who am I? What do I believe in? Am I a socially just practitioner?
- The epistemological task: What forms of knowing and knowledge – and thus curriculum, pedagogy and assessment – are socially just?
- The technical task: What teaching strategies and practices, forms of school organisation and system management embody socially just education?

"The synergy in the PI Protocol between these dimensions … provides a rich opportunity … to recognize and evaluate complex interactions between the learning and life outcomes of students, educational policies, socio-political and cultural factors, and the ongoing discourse of education."[37] There is a strong synergy between feminist pedagogies and the VU PI Protocol. In our consideration of our work as feminist educators at VU we selected four of the related 'Signature Pedagogies' of Participatory Action Research, Professional Practice, Repertoires of Practice and Teacher as Researcher as demonstrating common threads: recognising personal learning from immersion in practice, supporting communities of practice for improved learning environments, connecting with local communities, integrating community culture and knowledge into curriculum, participating in collecting data for analysis and critiquing research findings in the public domain.[38]

The elements above offer opportunity for making connections with Indigenous educators' demands for their communities' knowledge to be recognised and included in teacher education. The struggle against colonialism, where non-Indigenous educators learn how and where to be able to work together with Indigenous colleagues to become collaborative activists for the inclusion of Indigenous concerns in a revitalised curriculum, is critical and challenging terrain, sometimes referred to as intersectionality.

The challenging nature of this terrain is demonstrated by Celeste Liddle, Arrente woman, writer, feminist, activist and the National Tertiary Education Union's Indigenous organiser. In her keynote speech at the 2016 Victorian Women's Centre's annual International Women's Day event Liddle demanded that, in regard to feminism and intersectionality, we recognise:

Despite the fact that feminism has been the major movement to embrace and champion the concept, I honestly cannot say that I believe it is doing it particularly well…. a lot of my experience of intersectionality within feminism has been just another form of "othering" and inclusion via assimilation rather than subverting the oppressive structures, challenging the systems and shaking stuff up.[39]

Nonetheless Liddle also believes that "the politics of intersectionality is inherently revolutionary…. But [we need]… strong structural analysis… commitment to the rights of other human beings and the notion of equality for all…. actions … towards the identification of the systems of oppression and the clearing of the obstacles to allow diversification of discussion."[40] Feminist educational praxis, using methodologies such as the Signature Pedagogies of the PI Protocol, offer a basis for respectful working together to allow the many lifeworlds of women and girls to be honoured.

Challenging Neoliberalism Through Feminist Praxis

The neoliberalisation of universities, however, has increased workloads and class sizes, reduced the time and space for collective work and enforced a plethora of individual accountabilities. These changes more often marginalise rather than support feminist praxis. At VU, we are going through what feels like a never-ending process of re-structuring and budget strictures. The neoliberal ideology of individualism, standardisation and competition is being imposed on what has been a strong philosophy of engagement with students' lifeworlds, questions, language and experience in their own communities.

Feminists' challenge to neoliberalism in teacher education curriculum asserts the epistemological and ontological power of stories, in the exploration of women and girls' lifeworlds through oral histories, case writing, autobiographies and interviews, to offer students the opportunity to be active learners and community members. Feminists' challenge to neoliberalism in education policies is to resist standardisation and competition as the measures of learning and empowerment. Grundy's argument for emancipatory leadership underlines the necessity of such resistance:

"The educational leader whose work is framed by an emancipatory interest …. will see her work as being enabling and supportive of the action of the practitioners…. to transform the process of curriculum development into a process of critical pedagogy with emancipatory potential."[41] Such feminist leadership challenges the neoliberal obsession with putting 'efficiency' ahead of scholarship, critical thinking and supporting students to challenge inequalities.

Putting feminist theory and critique front and centre is not without its challenges. Lewis discusses what are common resistances to the politics of feminist pedagogy and especially in the context of a broader cultural backlash against feminism.[42] The recent and continuing focus on violence against women is all of a piece with anti-feminist backlash. In my experience, on campus this ranges from snide remarks about 'political correctness' to right-wing bigotry, to defacement of feminist posters. For example, a feminist lecturer pinned to the noticeboard an altered version of the famous *Rosie the Riveter* poster, depicting the iconic figure of a female production worker, changing the wording *We Can Do It!*, to *We are not Guys!* in recognition of the key role that language plays in ideological formations. The poster was defaced by the addition of a black "Hitler" moustache. As a critical pedagogical project, feminist praxis is by definition about struggle. It is, as Lewis suggests, emotional work on the part of teachers and students and often requires careful management because the political and theoretical invariably intersects the personal in complex ways. Moreover, the 'everyday' of studies in teacher education and placement are the immediate challenges for students and often there is an urgency and anxiety about them that may position educational philosophy and politics as esoteric and irrelevant.

Taking historical-biographical perspectives into the pre-service classroom helps to not so much circumvent but to approach anticipated resistances in a way that begins from the political and moves to the personal-professional. It brings confrontation into intellectual struggle, rather than getting stuck on what can be polarising opinions (e.g., exchanges initiated by a male student's anti-feminist comments) or trivialised engagement (e.g., a 'battle of the sexes' debates or 'feminism is irrelevant' conversation stoppers). The historical nature of the material matters here.[43] I have found that students generally know little of the

achievements of women in educational reform (and other fields) and there is genuine interest for most students. Notably, there is often more openness to theoretical dimensions, perhaps because many find educational theory to be the "hard stuff" and this is reinforced by the dominance of "what works" approaches across much of the technicised teacher education curriculum but also because it is closely tied into practice.[44] It may be that the women are interested because they connect to the idea of women's history, and working-class women's history, seeing something of themselves and their families, that has often been marginal to their studies.[45] These linkages are also supported by the PI process, re-connecting historical practice into present practice, professional knowledge, theorising and change.

One of the present concerns that come up regularly in the teacher education classroom is the time pressure pre-service teachers' face. It is the key issue for many in juggling studies, placements and paid work. In their placements, it is a pressure encompassing all the challenges they manage in becoming teachers – lesson preparation, building relationships, working in a faculty, marking etc. How to take the learnings around feminist approaches to education into the daily rounds of teaching is then a challenge. It takes courage to continue to challenge patriarchal student, colleague and administration expectations embedded in conventional university curriculum and pedagogies and ever-expanding attempts to enforce neoliberal monetarist frameworks on our work. Drawing on similarities in these dilemmas in teaching and teacher education and bringing in accounts of neoliberal structures goes some way toward furthering students' political understandings of education as "conditions and relations of production in which we work."[46] It also presents the opportunity to query how relations of collegiality may provide support in practical ways and as enactments of solidarity.

Conclusion

I have found it possible to bring the past into the present, where my activist career biography remains a powerful basis of my praxis. It provides a reflexive lens through which to continue to question the kinds of

praxis, or lack thereof, that is being embedded through technical "quality" alignments with external teacher education requirements and similarly neoliberal re-alignments within the university.

Feminist praxis has shown that we can see through the cracks and challenge the strictures imposed by oppressive ideology. We can listen to our students and involve them in decision-making and authentic research about their and other women's lives and communities. We can use methodologies which immerse our students in theory and practice that supports their development as teachers to continue and enhance the work feminist teachers have been doing for many decades. Empathy, courage and solidarity are key elements of a collective, feminist commitment to social justice.

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14

Educational Partnerships for Social Justice and Community Empowerment

Jo Williams

Introduction

There is a rich history of grassroots activism contesting the neoliberal hegemony, in society generally and in the field of education specifically. As educators interested in a liberatory, transformative pedagogical activism we are typically engaged in all types of resistance: working in collaborations across the spectrum of education stakeholders, defending the last bastions of education as a 'public good'.

Presently, under the banners of engagement and partnerships, educator activists are confronted by a neoliberal 'partnership agenda' that fosters the atomisation of resistance and protest. Schools and universities employ the liberal language of inclusion and community, often disguising an agenda of compliance, disempowerment and atomisation.[1] Despite the language of cooperation, reciprocity and mutual benefit, neoliberalism has reformulated the concepts of partnership and engagement in education policy as code for marketisation and commercialisation.

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Despite a significant amount of research on the challenges of working within such partnerships, there is a need for more literature that identifies and critiques the neoliberal character of such activity, and the ways in which progressive and even radical terminology has been usurped. Winter, Wiseman and Muirhead[2] note that in an increasingly corporatised university context and in the face of decreased public spending, neoliberal policy constitutes a significant risk to achieving meaningful community outcomes, as it emphasises increasing private revenue and private input into community decision making. Peacock highlighted the privileging of neoliberal values in the language of the university-community-engagement agenda.[3] Others variously described how in this context universities can narrowly conceive partnerships as recruitment, marketing, and improved profile/status exercises,[4] characterised by the downsizing of public institutions and funding in favour of increasing industry and community funding sources.[5] Ultimately, this is grounded in the assumption that knowledge must always be "applied" or "commercialised" if it is to be of "value".[6]

While the academy has been increasingly enslaved by the corporate world, it has other forces to answer to. Universities and schools cannot be considered only in functionalist and reproductive terms. They are both an expression of social relations but also contested terrain and have, since their earliest manifestations, included minority and counter-hegemonic elements. While engagement and partnerships practice are immersed in a neoliberal reform paradigm, there are individuals and forces whose interest in engagement is driven by social change aspirations rather than market objectives. Brackman[7] urges us to deeply consider this tension. In any case, the practice of partnerships, conceived of as community-driven, democratic and public, has been lacking in theoretical frameworks, and as such there are few contributions to perspectives for politically progressive/transformative or radical partnership activity in education.

As part of my doctoral project, I invited fellow activist[8] academics and school teachers to help me think through some of the questions I was asking: What are the challenges we face in turning such defensive battles into visionary constructions of an alternative, aimed at the positive reconstruction of education as human learning and emancipation? How might

we draw on our struggles, past lessons, and inspiration, to develop strategic perspectives for community driven, subversive partnerships?

While the responses proved a deep commitment to morally and ethically driven collaborative practice, and courage aplenty to resist the worst horrors of neoliberal education – uncertainty inevitably rang louder than any confident proclamations of 'what to do.' The dialogue revealed a generalised lack of strategy for the practices of resistance and protest, depicting a subversion of existing neoliberal partnerships policy in education that is atomised and without a unifying narrative or vision. Accompanying a sharp critique of neoliberalism, was a shared necessity to develop a language and practice of possibility and hope, to consider partnerships as community praxis not neoliberal hegemony.

This chapter constitutes my thinking about the shared values and motivations that the activists highlighted: solidarity, collaboration, information and resource sharing, and a collective engagement with radical ideas. It considers possible action in and through education for the public good and explores the ways in which space for counter-hegemonic practices might exist for us working in higher education. It hopes to reclaim that which has become lost in the neoliberal era – the idea of academics being part of historical change – and considers how we might build partnerships that seek to empower us to enact substantive change rather than merely 'include' our partners and ourselves in the existing flawed system.

Here I offer five possible lines of development for alternative partnership discourse and action:

  (i) Partnerships as struggle.
 (ii) Partnerships as valuing 'folk' knowledge: sharing battle stories, 'memoria viva'.
(iii) Partnerships as solidarity: building solidarity across different levels of education institutions and the various 'subjects' engaged in educational communities.
 (iv) Partnerships as 'conscientização' (consciousness raising): placing a conscious and deliberate process of 'conscientisation' at the heart of authentic community driven partnerships.
  (v) Partnerships as collective dreaming.

Drawing on my and the activists' experiences and perspectives, this chapter focuses on Freire's theoretical framework for liberatory praxis.[9] Thinking critically with Freire, I argue that, for partnerships to be authentic expressions of community, they cannot start from the point of view of enabling educational policy but rather must be about subverting it.

Partnerships, Struggle and Agency at the 'End of History'

As educator activists we are working in a historical context of neoliberal triumphalism and decades of defeat and retreat of movements for social change and of organised resistance. After the 'end of history' and 'death of communism', under the banner of neoliberalism, capitalism put an end to society, as Margaret Thatcher famously proclaimed, thoroughly marginalising ideas of collectivism and anti-capitalism. Through this, a rich history of knowledge and experience arising from a century of radical and socialist struggle has been buried along with so-called 'communism' and the liberal idea of progress and social democracy. The idea of a counter-hegemonic discourse has overwhelmingly been dissolved into a postmodern anti-discourse, with those fighting for something better left to act within the ambit of a supposedly immutable capitalism and without a story "of a better world" to tell.[10] In education, whatever its (useful) contributions, postmodernism's emphasis on infinite and hybrid perspectives and identities, through a reduction of political praxis to "particularised and localised acts of consumption in the cultural sphere"[11] has all too often rendered it incapable of envisioning (let alone organising) a way of uniting in solidarity to resist capitalism. Secular radicalism is left without a moral compass or strategic framework.

Presented as benign but powerful, progressive but 'responsible', neoliberal partnerships are viewed as "semi-autonomous organisational vehicles through which governmental, private, voluntary and community sector actors engage in the process of debating, deliberating and delivering public policy at the regional and local level".[12] However, the neoliberal approach in partnerships avoids any discussion of power and social

conflict, except as historically de-situated difference and diversity. It follows that, for partnership practice to be authentic expressions of community, it must be deliberately, consistently and coherently subversive. Here Freire's assertion that the educator must become educated is critical – to understand the inseparable link between knowledge and transformative practice (praxis).

In the neoliberal context, proclaimed objectives of inclusion, those that entice educators to take on partnership activity, can become a form of corporatism; creating frustration and building illusion and disillusion. These conversations are limited to reflecting remnants of past possibilities and liberal idealisations and often have limited or no connection to experiences of specific struggles and community organising. At times, claims to build community voice, in a context of a lack of authentic understanding of each other's (partners') perspectives, creates the potential for 'deficit' thinking about 'community' voices, and the lack of capacity to make a case for your own views whoever you are. As Freire himself explained, words that cannot realise constructive, meaningful action – where educational actors are "deprived of their dimension of action"[13] – are reduced to a benign verbalism.

Counterposed to an educational process serving social hegemony, partnerships may be understood not as a mechanism by which people are coerced into adapting to the existing learning environment, but as a total process of self-empowerment and education, as advocated by Freire. Such a process was alluded to by my fellow activists:

> *I am inspired by Freire's 'education as a practice of freedom', the creation of a language of possibility for a democratic education … I am always looking for the social justice angle, if you like, one which can embed a practice of a possibility of broader social change in education.* (Sally)

> *I hope [we] can become a place that contributes to the development of a justice-centred, democratic vision of education, where pedagogical practice is focused on social change.* (Azlan)

A Freirean perspective explains how authentic social inclusion is only possible through a struggle against those socio-political structures that restrict participation in the whole human enterprise and atomise society, in a word, capitalism.

In problematising educational activity, Freire argues for a process fundamentally rooted in the existential realisation of oppression (conscientisation) as the starting point for humanistic social practice. Any 'engagement' not based on this is 'false' and misleading. It is a naively conceived humanism that often overlooks the concrete, existential, present situation of real people. Authentic humanism, in Furter's words, "consists in permitting the emergence of the awareness of our full humanity, as a condition and as an obligation, as a situation and as a project".[14] Without naming and subverting oppression and exploitation, community engagement becomes deception and in existential terms – alienation.

The fundamentally political content of Freire's pedagogy must be recaptured as the foundation for avoiding 'false solutions' in engagement and partnerships. It is this revolutionary aspect of Freire's work which has long been under-emphasised, or removed altogether by many progressive educational theorists who claim to be influenced by his work. McLaren argues that Freire is 'domesticated' by revisionists who wish to limit the power of his work by denouncing social justice without identifying and working to dismantle the structural bases of such injustice.[15]

Rather, such a distorted use of Freire's work is used to "…camouflage existing capitalist social relations [with] real socialist alternatives… nowhere to be found".[16] Giroux counters Freire's problem-solving approach as "the liberation of individuals and groups as historical subjects through a critical educational process that involves making the pedagogical more political and the political more pedagogical".[17]

From a radical, Freirean perspective, any authentic community engagement in education needs to break from market-centred approaches and provide other visions and concepts that could subvert neoliberal intentions and produce a counter-hegemonic practice. Freire's insistence on education as a partnership for fundamental social change can form the basis for an alternative, anti-capitalist approach.[18]

The examples shared by the activists demonstrated both continuing resistance to neoliberal 'engagement' and 'partnership' as well as the limitations of local community-centred alternatives removed from the larger context and vision of anti-systemic struggles and social movements. As Freire points out, such frustrations do not finalise the process but simply open up new possibilities and challenges.[19]

An important starting point for the development of authentic community-driven partnerships is a rejection of the neoliberal premises of building social-capital through 'new paternalism'.[20] What we might call an ideology of the new paternalism lays the basis for partnership work that is carried out either with an explicitly deprecatory approach or worse, a thinly veiled, false benevolence.

A number of the research participants spoke of working with others who "consciously, deliberately and energetically aim to develop a subversive practice." (Azlan) Some participants responded directly to Freire:

> Well, yes, a simple answer is for me (us) not to teach, apologise or model capitalism but actively reveal that there are alternative frameworks for social and economic being. So as Freire pointed out, we have to be ideological and be upfront that all of our actions are ideological, we carry ideology with us especially as educators and we need to be honest with our students and co-educators about the positions we hold. This is not easy as the usual response is rejection by other educators and resistance from students. (Theo)

Theo elaborated on Freire's fundamental point, that there can be no agency proper if it is at the whim and mercy of bureaucratic benevolence or worse still if it becomes an aspect of the corporatist strategy of co-option and demobilisation of opposition.

Developing Critical Education Partnerships for Social Transformation

The research conversations revealed how activist-educators currently exist in a context of atomised opposition to neoliberalism and that no 'models' can substitute for the necessity of a language and vision of education as liberation borne out of mass and united struggle. The current climate stands in contrast to the period of the 1960s and 1970s, when the emergence of various social and political movements, included those which first engendered and nourished the ideas of Freire. Of course, such a language and strategy of education as liberation cannot be intellectually conjured up. Rather we can draw from the experiences of those currently

engaged in struggle to invoke some 'general lines' for discussion and deliberation of strategy.

Partnerships as Struggle

It might appear obvious but in the context of a historically demobilised subject, the centrality of struggle needs re-emphasis. Present forms of partnerships in education are rarely connected with broader movements, and rarely seen as vehicles through which to engage in social action. Rather, they are often a means amongst others to coopt and redirect (undermine) opposition and resistance in a pre-determined, closed-off and 'safe' institutional framework.

This suggests the practice of activist-educators must realise struggle through de-institutional and/or anti-institutional practice. Neoliberal partnerships are inherently institutionally-bound, but for activist-educators involved in educational partnerships a conscious outward focus and a deliberate linking with activist struggles in and outside of formal education are critical. The educator activists emphasised the importance of looking to and learning from (and with) external campaigns and movements, including the global Occupy movement and local and national student campaigns against increased fees and budget cuts. Academic Theo, emphasised the importance of participating in local battles for specific resources and spaces, both to resist such attacks and as a means to ensure rebellious practices can continue. Teacher activists Isabella and Finn emphasised the links between trade union and professional issues for educators.

Partnerships as Valuing 'Folk' Knowledge: Sharing Battle Stories, 'Memoria Viva'

Emerging clearly from the research was the importance of sharing 'battle stories', or what is referred to by activists and intellectuals in Spanish as *memoria viva* ('living memory'). The exigencies of neoliberalism see current partnerships mostly acting as fleeting, disconnected and frag-

mented experiences, with little to no time or space for history to be learnt, applied and reflected upon. Rarely are the actual experiences and histories of 'partners' emphasised as fundamental to meaning-making and/or to determining the purpose and organisation of the partnership. The idea of partnerships as collaborative and active vehicles for valuing and growing a collective 'living memory' points to their potential as counter-systemic practice in the bigger task of developing alternative visions and realities to neoliberalism.

Such an approach presents obvious challenges, given the destruction of so much tradition and history of social movements and struggle during the neoliberal era. The collective recounting of memories that has emerged out of decades of post-dictatorship movements in Latin America, stands as a counter example, and highlights the importance of emphasising historical memory among new campaigns. A plethora of websites, blogs, networks and writing projects have appeared over the last few decades with the purpose of recapturing, documenting and sharing a 'people's history' under the banner of memoria viva. Arguably the centrality of such for the development of vision and strategy in emancipatory education has been a theoretical aspect of Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed since its origins.

Memoria viva is philosophically bound up with Aristotle's idea that memory "gives access to knowledge",[21] and is central to creating a living argument for an emancipatory practice of education. Without a history of struggle, agency is reduced to the utopian. Without historical memory educational practice will tend to be reduced to a pragmatic approach. Educator activist, Azlan described his views on the practical significance of memoria viva:

> For me the key is constantly striving to connect the everyday classroom experience and content with the history and dynamics of global society and the communities and practices of resistance and rebellion… Part of this is getting students to think both in terms of concrete historical analysis as well as encouraging the 'utopian' thinking that flows from a 'morality of social justice'.

Fals-Borda and Anisur Rahman emphasise the importance of a critical recovery of history in research, and speak of the "effort to discover

selectively, through collective memory, those elements of the past which have proved useful in the defense of the interests of exploited classes and which may be applied to the present struggles to increase conscientisation".[22] Like Freire, they emphasise that the present cannot be understood without understanding the past, and yet partnerships in education are often presented as organisational fixes which can be seamlessly transferred, dropped-in, applied in any circumstance, at any time. Any meaningful collaboration with an expectation for action and change must be grounded in a collectivised history, as Apple argues, in order to work with "the residual idea that there is more than just one way to structure social life, where social exclusion is not a daily reality".[23]

In practical terms, memoria viva signposts the need for educational activists to make time to share battle stories, document and discuss the histories of radical and progressive struggles both inside and outside of education, as a critical rather than optional element of developing a counter-hegemonic partnership practice. For example, the educator activists described how classrooms must be utilised to make sense of students' real experiences, their lives, their struggles, their family histories and their hopes and values. Schoolteacher Anna talked about incorporating themes of "democracy, racism, diversity and creating change" to deepen students' understanding of their own experiences. In Anna's classes,

> *Most of the students have been born and raised in refugee camps and have never set foot on their homeland. Because of their age and the complexity of the conflict their families have fled from, many have limited understanding about the reasons why their lives have turned out the way they have… I see [them] as 'global citizens' – with roots in one country, raised in another, now living in Australia with relatives in countries around the world, speaking English as their second, third or fourth language… the students have an immediate and personal reference point for complex ideas and concepts and many are eager to work with others who have had or are having similar experiences to themselves.* (Anna)

The interest and necessity described by educators in locating their activism in a broader emancipatory project resonates with Freire's deeply hopeful problem-posing education. Freire affirms the idea of education

as a subversive 'historical movement'. Critical partnerships must be valued as central to this broader, subversive and historical movement/agenda.

Partnerships as Solidarity

For Freire, educational engagement is fundamentally about solidarity. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* he emphasised dialogue and solidarity as the basis for cooperation for change.[24] Darder discusses Freire's vision for democratic, participatory alliances where "…progressive teachers can participate in counter-hegemonic political projects that do not dichotomise their work as cultural workers and social activists" and "where a solidarity of differences is cultivated, [where] teachers from diverse communities and class positions can work together to create unifying, albeit heterogeneous and multifaceted, anti-capitalist political strategies to counter conservative efforts to destroy public schooling".[25]

Both Freire's and Darder's points about solidarity align closely with the aspirations for an antidote to the alienation and isolation expressed by many of the educator activists. The academics spoke of the pressures of the corporatised education world and the ways in which they foster segregation and encourage complacency. Others spoke about the need to build alliances that bring people together around social justice, generating dialogue about how to solve problems and facilitating collective action. Such alliances must challenge the hierarchies in/of education and democratise and politicise our relationships with each other, our students and communities.

This is not to deny the difficulties of such Freirean practice, especially in the context of relative mass political passivity – most radical educators are often forced back into the classroom or research group as a haven for discussion, further separating them from community. At a time when governments are attempting to harness community support against educators and push through further neoliberal education reforms, often couched in terms of 'engagement' and on the basis of making schools and universities more transparent to 'the community', precisely the opposite is required.

Under neoliberalism 'solidarity' can be substituted with 'engagement', where 'input' passes for democratic deliberation and accounting renders community subjects voiceless. Freire clarifies the need for such alliance-building to be conceived of and enacted as counter or anti-institution in practice, with the experiences, histories and voices of grassroots actors front and centre.

Freire was explicit in his belief that "political action on the side of the oppressed must be pedagogical action in the authentic sense of the word, and, therefore, action with the oppressed".[26] He emphasised that revolutionary change required leaders but that they must act in solidarity and never consider leading *for* the people. Rather "the oppressed and the leaders are equally the Subjects of revolutionary action"[27] and "(t)his truth … must become radically consequential; that is, the leaders must incarnate it, through communion with the people".[28] This is fundamentally relevant to those wishing to develop educational collaboration for liberation and posits a challenge for educators to foster a dialogical process involving "subjects who meet to name the world in order to transform it".[29] What are the implications of this for educational partnerships? What does Freire's 'dialogical process' look like and what exactly constitutes 'communion with the people'?

A constant theme to emerge out of this research with educator activists was the idea of listening and talking – a rejection of the hierarchical, paternalistic and patronising nature of many of the relationships they had experienced in educational partnerships. But neither is the kind of solidarity required an amorphous, fireside conversation. Freire is explicit that the sort of leadership which is compatible with a consistent emancipatory practice is fundamentally dialogical. Darder emphasises leadership which opens the way for struggle through honest questioning, open expression of voices, multiple forms of participation, and genuine structures of democratic decision making, guided by a moral imperative and solidarity with the most disenfranchised.[30]

Enacting solidarity in educative partnerships, we need "to recognise the historical limits placed on agents but also to realise that it is possible to push those limits and the conditions that constrain them".[31] It is difficult to conceive of any emancipatory 'partnering' practice emerging without some individuals 'pushing the limits'. Freire spoke about not being

a "prisoner of a 'circle of certainty' within which reality is imprisoned" and stressed the problems with 'fake' or 'naïve' programs with false or misleading, unattainable outcomes, for example those partnerships that claim to transform communities or guarantee participants' success with little to no understanding of their lived realities, history and desires.[32] In short, it is fundamental for any authentic partnerships to avoid neoliberalism's invitation to be part of a hollowed out democracy, reduced to discourse without substance. Any 'democracy' where rational argument is separated from social power – economic and socio-political – presents a dead end for partnerships.[33]

Solidarity is essentially the idea and act of supporting otherwise strangers united by common economic and socio-political interests. As such solidarity entails, promotes and forms the basis of trust on a social/community level. Without trust – as an expectation of the co-operation of others – the subject is demobilised. Forging and deepening such solidarity based on trust must be a fundamental task of critical partnerships.

Partnerships as 'Conscientização'

The community-driven partnership does not come ready made; it does not flow from the logic of the market but rather can only emerge from a process of struggle and consciousness-raising; where communities elaborate objectives and strategies and find common cause. Freire's concept of 'conscientização' is about finding a way to connect the immediate concerns of individuals to an emancipatory perspective that can both encompass and transcend the immediate. This tension was expressed by the research participants, as they grappled with 'working with people where they are at', while trying to also transcend this.

Comparing the individualistic 'aspirations' mantra of New Paternalism with a Freirean approach that centres around critiquing and abandoning identities rooted in oppression, and re-identifying (forming new identities) through critical consciousness, defining shared interests and alliance building enables a reactivation of "an examination of the dominant society and constitutes a shift in the form of agency, a movement from the social to the political".[34]

McLaren explains the process of disidentification and identification, as one through which Subjects study and understand the power relations that shape their current identities in order to consider their future identities, stressing that "Freire perceived a major ideological tension to be situated in the ability of people to retain a concept of the political beyond a reified consumer identity constructed from the panoply of market logics and their demotic discourses".[35] This involves "linking the categories of history, politics, economics, and class to the concepts of culture and power" conjoining "a language of critique and a language of hope".[36] This creates the critical space for intervention and the possibility of a counter-ideology based on the Freirean idea of identifying oppression and encouraging a critical consciousness, constituting a "shift in the form of agency".[37]

For critical partnerships viewed as a subversive and transformative practice, this first stage – the radicalisation of the individual subject – engenders the opportunity for collective action: the moment of engagement. The actuality of engagement then turns to the possible, what each community can bring into the struggle for social change. Subversion of the capitalist hegemony becomes the compass for engagement and collective solidarity, and hope the spirit that fuels every action and conversation. Conscientização is understood not as a watered down, co-opted version of empowerment but rather as a political act: the realisation of rebellion as the only meaningful agency.

Partnerships as Collective Dreaming

The actuality of resistance, struggle and activist pedagogy necessarily inspires collectivism and images of a better future. This existential dreaming – rooted in real life collective struggle – is the fuel of Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed.[38] Ultimately this is the message that the educator activists emphasised in the discussion.

Che Guevara and later the student and worker uprising in Paris in May–June 1968, popularised the slogan "*Seamos realistas y hagamos lo imposible*" or "let's be realistic and do the impossible!" The slogan reflects that social change does not emerge from institutional or policy blueprints but rather out of the invariably chaotic but also energetically cooperative

resistance of ordinary people. The educator activists reflected exactly this: their struggles were armed not with blueprints but rather with the energy of resistance, rebellion and a solidarity that inspires dreams of liberation. We academics reflect this every day when we find ways of jamming the wheels of the neoliberal machine: by speaking the truth despite curriculum narrowness; by supporting learning despite assessment; and by encouraging student (and our own) dissent despite the authoritarianism of the contemporary academy.

Neoliberal partnerships, promoting self-interest and competition, encapsulated in the idea of 'aspiration', can only suppress any dreaming of different potentialities and objectives. Neoliberal partnerships privilege individualistic aspirations based on fear and alienation rather than collective goals and hopes based on solidarity, trust and empathy. Rather than the progressive and innovative activities they are sold as, neoliberal partnerships at best offer a slightly better outcome in a flawed but inevitable system – and even then, only for an elite few at any one time, never for the local let alone global majority.

By contrast, at the heart of Darder's writing on the work of Paulo Freire is an optimistic urgency about the task at hand. She reminds us:

> *Freire's frequent response to questions about issues that perpetuate educational injustice was to challenge us to consider the nature of the limits we were confronting and how we might transcend these limitations in order to discover that beyond these situations, and in contradiction to them, lie untested feasibilities for personal, institutional, and socioeconomic restructuring.*[39]

Such 'untested feasibilities' best sums up the conversation with many of the educator activists. Through their contributions emerged a clear rejection or counter-position to the pragmatism of social democracy and postmodernism, in other words there is no point stopping at the limits of the possible or imminent. Instead, these educator activists drew (practical) guidance from the feasibility of the untested, the possibility of subverting hegemonies and opening avenues of resistance and liberation.

Critical partnerships for radical change and justice must, from the outset, be open to and celebrate collective dreaming and the opportunity to reimagine the universities we work and study in, the schools we teach in and/or attend and the communities of which we are a part.

Conclusion

The integrative logic of neoliberal partnerships is both internally contradictory and subject to the global contradictions of capitalist development, invariably producing counter-forces expressed not only in economic crisis but more importantly resulting in inevitable struggle. This logic of struggle, sporadic and contradictory as it is, provides the basis for an alternative practice of partnerships directed against neoliberalism.

Such struggles have elements of both spontaneity and deliberate design, working dialectically, and constantly battling the ideological hegemony of the market. Through these battles, activist educators work against this hegemony, aiming to consciously promote the 'folk knowledge' of educational communities, and applying the methodology of 'conscientização' on collective and individual levels; leading in the development of critical consciousness.

All of this is happening at a time when the ideological hegemony of capital is seemingly without global challenge, apparently omnipresent. Against this backdrop activist educators have no choice but to be dreamers and to promote such dreaming through all of our activity.

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15

Cracked Continuities in the Project of Cultural Democracy: Silencing, Resistance and Privilege

Dorothy Bottrell and Catherine Manathunga

Introduction

Our aim in this volume has been to shed light on how academics are surviving in "the ruins"[1] and finding ways to resist managerial oppression that aims to disarm resistance through the fragmentation of the academic workforce, individual responsibilisation and closures to democratic processes. In this chapter we reflect on the resistances articulated by our contributors and highlight the interrelated workings of silencing and privilege under managerial regimes. We broadly frame our reflection in terms of cracked continuities with the projects of cultural democracy

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encompassing work toward equality and workplace democracy. As we suggested in Chap. 1 the window of radical campus politics of the 70s had, on the back of social movements of the 60s, begun to shift elite traditions in universities. These openings centred on participatory education and governance and reflected social change that pushed toward greater equality on many fronts. Official discourses about social justice and equity in terms of the role and purpose of Australian universities were at their peak in this period[2] and inside the university, especially in humanities, social sciences and education, there were "pockets of resistance"[3] to conservative hierarchical structures and "banking" education.[4] Social justice, freedom, equity and democracy were the legitimate vocabulary of critical pedagogy and scholarship. While they remain important drivers for many academics, especially in feminist, queer, postcolonial/ anticolonial and radical education studies and in recent work toward decolonising the academy, the project of cultural democratisation persists despite universities' neoliberal agendas.

Darder argues that cultural equality is "foremost, about an institution's ability to embrace a culturally democratic view of life that not only supports participation by all constituents, but also provides avenues for different cultural voices to be heard and integrated within the changing culture and history of the institution".[5] Conditions for cultural equality include the decentralisation of power with multiple spaces for "expression of cultural integrity and diversity, and for cross-cultural dialogue, decision-making, and social action to take place".[6] Such conditions presuppose the institution's "emancipatory intent" which is also reflected in teaching and research praxis.[7] But rather than having expanded earlier participatory openings to create a culturally democratic institution, the neoliberal colonisation of the academy has eroded these necessary conditions. As Marginson's[8] analysis of higher education systems shows, the market logic embraced by governments as human capital formation and by university governance as massification and marketisation, has skewed the outcomes of higher education toward private rather than public or collective goods. Massified higher education has become elite-forming rather than a disruptive force for social equality. Academic work is similarly reconfigured in dollar terms that erode conditions for teaching, research and service as the managerial institutional framework supporting market function involves various forms of "creative destruction",[9]

including attacks on unions, labour shedding, flexible, individualised employment contracts and diminished employee rights and benefits,[10] new "divisions of labour, social relations… technological mixes… and habits of the heart".[11]

The chapters in this volume have documented destructive consequences of managerialism as a governing hierarchy and organisational logic. It is important to name the reconfiguration of academic work as *oppressive*, because there are now many ways that the managerial framework silences academics and one of the conditions it relies on is academics' consciousness of privilege. Yet privilege is multifaceted, working discursively through hierarchical structures as well as horizontally as a technology of responsibilisation enmeshing passion, position and politics. These are never separate dimensions but here we briefly note some ways privilege may be ontologically formative.

As women who signed up and still subscribe to the idea of the university in terms of social rather than market mission, we are conscious of the privileges afforded by our education and the opportunity to work in higher education. As women from working-class backgrounds we were conscious that critical voices in the academy and social movements paved the way for us to join the ranks of the next generation of critical scholars whose teaching, research and service could contribute to social justice. It is this passionate privilege that managerialism exploits through the culture of overwork, enabling its rampant accountability regime. As White women academics, we are conscious of the privilege we embody in the context of persistent racialised inequalities inside and outside the university. As feminist scholarship continues to demonstrate, there are deep crevasses between and within different subject positions and relations to knowledge that are historically constructed, persist in the present and are re-made through neoliberalisation. The "radical individualism" now signified in "ambition, power, merit, self-sufficiency and interiority"[12] forms and morphs through/within older and new hierarchies of prestige that disqualify certain voices in the re/production of racialised, ethnicised and gendered, inequalities. Privilege is then also a political mechanism of silencing and a conduit for s[m]oothing resistances that dissociate our subject positions and subjectivities from this privilege.

As Darder[13] has argued, resistances thus entail ongoing engagement with issues of privilege, power relations, exclusion and active and negotiated

ownership of institutions. This requires the focus of academic work to be outward looking and internally scrutinising the university, letting the light in on differently positioned consequences of managerialism and resistances. In the next section we elaborate on managerialism's silencing academics and recap the ways it tightens its grip on academic work. We then turn to reflect on academic resistance and some further thoughts on privilege. In the discussion that follows, we do not aim to assimilate our contributors' diverse standpoints, ontologies and approaches to being critical. We use the metaphor of *seeing through the cracks* here to signify the necessity of not representing a unified or simplistic 'interest convergence'[14] even while our resistances are interested in forging solidarities.

Silencing Academic Work for Cultural Democracy

The openings to structural and cultural democratisation of higher education in the 1970s were short-lived, as the forces of conservativism and socioeconomic privilege were quick to rally against the beginnings of radical changes. Reimer[15] notes the admission of women to the academy coincided with the unfolding of commercialisation and numerous managerial restrictions on the scope of academic work. While women now outnumber men, there is a pattern of downgrading positions and opportunities previously observed in male-dominated sectors opening to women's participation.[16] Morley[17] refers to recent patterns of widening participation in universities as "an equity paradox": "As soon as an under-represented group decode the mysteries of access and participation, there are contamination and devaluation fears". As Stengers and Despret[18] illustrated, having let women, working class, ethnically diverse and Indigenous students and academics into the academy, we were unable to make long-term and sustainable inroads, especially by the turn of the twenty-first century. We were tolerated in universities if we kept quiet.

From the standpoint of "borderlands" scholars of colour, Darder[19] argues that as neoliberal multiculturalism overtook the politics of

difference framed around democratising visions of the university, "politically distinct voices" were subject to "conservative backlash", "political correctness debates" and ultimately "a whitewashed and politically lukewarm scholarship" aiming to homogenise and close down "dissenting voices of critical academics". In U.S. universities, critical studies and "borderlands" scholars of colour, feminists, Marxists/structuralists and poststructural scholars have been targeted in recent budget-driven course cuts and the silencing of "culture wars" that demanded and critiqued new terrains of intellectual and political struggle. Co-opting institutional discourses of equity and diversity neutralise the imperatives of cultural integrity and contestations of difference and cultural values,[20] converting racialized identities, sexuality, class and gender into individualised, institutional "assets" where, as Taylor notes, "heterosexuality, whiteness and middle-classness go unmarked, not made to stand for diversity".[21] In these ways, neoliberalisation brings closure to political discourses of difference, diversity and exclusion and through concerted attacks on radical scholarship preserves/reasserts "the sanctity of individual private interests and the doctrine of free enterprise, within a political system that has long equated capitalism with democracy".[22]

Managerialism as governing hierarchy brings closure to democratic workplace processes, silencing academics. While we (authors) only became academics after neoliberal trends had begun sweeping through Australian universities (Catherine in 1991, Dorothy in 2007), there were visible traces of cultural and workplace democracy. Academics were still elected to some senior management roles or reluctantly took their turn for short periods before returning to their research and teaching positions. There were committees who worked on teaching, research and service projects and work on equity within the faculty that linked into the university's gender equity, diversity and Indigenous strategies. We voted in regular faculty meetings and debated and put proposals forward for faculty plans. There was always politics but there was a basic level of agreement about the legitimacy of democratic process and free speech. More recently, in our daily academic practice, we have seen fewer and fewer occasions of such discussion and debate.

The idea of contesting university or faculty purposes within our faculties or wider university fora is no longer a possibility in many places.

Instead, we receive presentations or scripted videos on strategic plans, sometimes accompanied by take-home reading to improve our financial literacy, and then are invited to tweak the edges of strategy documents, so long as such tweakings do not affect the bottom line. (Never mind that this will likely mean contributing to our own or others' demise when the strategy includes re-structure.) Other forums for academic voice are also diminished. Moreton-Robinson et al.'s[23] review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation in the governance of Australian universities found that Indigenous participation was concentrated in low-level Indigenous-specific committees and working parties with few attached resources and very limited scope for influencing university culture and policies. "The rhetoric of inclusion, whether it is espoused in equity policies or reconciliation statements, provides the rationale for the existence of these Indigenous specific committees. However, their lack of power, authority and status means that their ability to be effective decision-making bodies is circumscribed."[24]

Rowlands[25] outlines a number of ways the space for academic authority is diminishing. In Australian and English universities around 50 percent of academic board positions are now held by managers. The domination of boards and other forums by executive voice and separation of 'academic strategy' from academic work has diminished the scope for academics' decision-making over matters of teaching and research that directly affect us. This shift includes greater administrative control in standardising and defining the scope of academic practice and 'outputs'. Tuchman[26] observes similar processes in *Wannabe U*, where deans now make changes without any faculty discussion and executives control more of the academic terrain: "Once upon a time… a provost might have said, 'That's an academic decision: a department should decide it.'… nowadays the provost isn't about to cede authority".[27] As Rowlands[28] suggests, such changes go to the heart of changing meanings and structures of academic work: "Academic governance is not something 'out there'. Rather, it is central to being an academic and to doing academic work."

As an organisational logic, managerialism has driven the expansion of infrastructure of compliance and in pursuit of outcomes for the massified, marketised university, managerialism has tightened its grip on academic work. Throughout this volume, contributors have drawn attention to the

increased pressure of academic workloads, intensification of accountabilities and processes of eroding democratic workplace culture. They have discussed the *administrative* burden that eats into time for class preparation, marking and student consultations and email bombardment (Chaps. 2 and 3). The top-down email barrage is a very non-collegial governing at a distance. Stories of "the firing squad" and name-and-shame rankings updates are examples of how governing by email may induce acute consciousness of precarity (Chap. 7). And then there are the daily rounds of sending email apologies. Juggling to-do lists in compressed time,[29] means some work is inevitably late and this is a constant source of anxiety (Chaps. 3 and 10). The 'email deluge' now includes information, resources and marketing from publishing, conference, e-learning, leadership, student exchange industries and so on, traverses all aspects of academic work and accountabilities and, as Sinclair[30] suggests, is "surely a good way to ensure that [we] cannot devote any thinking time to challenge the status quo or engage in potentially dangerous ideas or opposition".

The requirements of *teaching* are discussed in terms of increased teaching loads and class sizes, and various ways that neoliberal standardisations (externally regulated in professional curricula (Chap. 12), as well as through managerial requirements) and narrow conceptions of teaching and learning empties out the need for critical inquiry (Chap. 13); the need to keep students happy being prioritised over intellectual engagement (Chaps. 2 and 3); and the demand for fast and dirty "package tour" curricula that erases provocation (Chap. 5). Contributors have discussed the rationing of *research* allocations and changing rules and metrics that are forms of inclusion and exclusion to serve the bottom line (Chaps. 2, 4, and 11). Cases of *service* illustrate distorted "engagement", carelessly damaged partnerships (Chaps. 8, 9, and 14), extreme executive colonisation of public projects (Chap. 9) and the invisibility of non-metricised contributions to professional and local communities (Chaps. 4 and 6).

The chapters have documented the intensification of *accountabilities* ranging from ensuring teaching guides conform to template and standard, measuring up on "quality" teaching when students' learning time has decreased or when student reviews dictate the terms of confronting whitestream truths (Chap. 5). And then there is the DIY online reporting

of everything. The challenging psychic and emotional labour of managing oneself and attempting to juggle, rein in and carve out space for a personal life outside the university is also recounted (Chaps. 3 and 6). In many ways this is a life that is never "outside" the university as much of the "invisible" workload spills over into home space. These conditions constitute the "wounds" and ambivalences and blockages to academic careers (Chaps. 4, 6, and 7) and rely on a "bootstrapping" resilience[31] on the part of academics (Chap. 8). They are embedded in a workplace culture diminished by "poisonous industrial relations" (Chap. 2), "organisational toxicity" (Chap. 4) and "dog eat dog" competitiveness (Chap. 3) where managerial bullying and rank-based vexatiousness is common (Chaps. 4 and 8).

The intensification of managerialism is achieved through individual responsibilisation, in ways that avert top-level management's accountability for punitive workloads and toxic workplace culture.[32] This responsibilisation takes many forms and appears to garner academic assent to continuous, improved productivity in worsening conditions. It does so through responsibilisation that is a "friendly" force exploiting individual passion for our disciplines, the pursuit of knowledge and what can still be the pleasures of teaching, research and service.[33] It also harnesses the desire for success[34] as a good fit with the institutional framework of competition and market transactions. As performative success is now a day-to-day CV-accumulating means of intellectual capital, it is a seductive and rewarding game, though one that (like any competition) distributes rewards highly unevenly.[35] Responsibilisation also harnesses fear of failing and job loss.[36] Such technologies remind us that autonomy is dependent upon self-management[37] and self-development (Chap. 7) and underscore the message that "the individual has no intrinsic worth or job security apart from the products and services they continue to deliver".[38]

The neoliberal logic of maximising market transactions and managerial logic of following instructions, reverence for budget and metricised quality[39] are fortunately not the only possibilities for understanding our academic work and how academics conduct them/ourselves. Many academics still hold to the values of academic freedom, autonomy, participatory and cultural democracy and the public and collective good and scrutiny of these values. The organisational culture is thus a space of

contradictory ideologics where there appears a massive "schism" between "managed academics" and "academic managers", particularly in understanding of academic and institutional identities and purposes.[40] "A scholarly community" persists, coexisting with the corporation and bureaucracy.[41] As Tuchman[42] observed in her ethnography of *Wannabe U*, professional ("traditional" academic values) and service logics have not been obliterated. It is in these cracks or schisms that people are finding ways to resist and hold to 'radical' commitments.

Resistances

The chapters in this volume show how academics are seeing through the cracks and contesting neoliberal purposes with very different cultural logics and values. In the context of managerial silencing, speaking out is a first resistance. Contributors also push back against managerial requirements to assert the kinds of accountabilities emphasised by Amsler and Shore,[43] including care, collegiality, and political work that inheres in teaching, research and service. It is often a struggle to hold to collective ideals when so much of everyday academic life is privatised and frantic, so it is unsurprising to find in many contributions here and in the broader literature that oppressive work conditions entail much self-management in order to do so. Perhaps *the* first resistance should be, as Grant's (Chap. 6) 'wrestling with career' reminds us, having a life outside work and being "well and connected to loving others". There are many examples in these chapters of the everyday resistances Westoby and Shevellar (Chap. 10) discuss as the "delicate activism" of "re-humanising the work", involving care of the self and others. Collegiality and collective resistances are part of this work and as resistances activate the passionate and political privilege of academic position.

Speaking Out

There are now many ways that academics are made unable or fearful to speak about oppressive work conditions and punitive treatment or are

subject to the latter if we do. Managerial bullying, spurious dismissal and job precarity generalise a culture of fear[44] and intersect with practical reasons why individuals may censor themselves in university forums – needing the job; supporting mortgages and kids. For others, truth-telling occurs in private in the hope and determination to forge a successful career. When managerial tactics are ineffectual in academics' self-silencing, the legal arm of "muscular managerialism"[45] comes down on academics. Gagging clauses in redundancy agreements and unfair dismissal settlements legally protect the university ("the brand") and its officers (governing cadre) against legitimate critique[46] and are part of a wider curtailment of academic freedom in which public universities protect powerful private/corporate interests. This is most often related to the privatisation of university funding and reflects management's willingness to come down on the side of commercial or political appeasement against protection of critical academics legitimately questioning corporate behaviour.[47]

In this context, speaking out is itself a form of resistance. As Valero et al. argue (Chap. 7), the "public secrets" are necessary forms of affective subjectivation enabling the working of power, in personalising "deficits", de-politicised from the Darwinian context of ruthless competition that academic capitalism and managerialism produce.[48] Maintaining secrecy is a managerial weapon that ensures accountability for its excesses are kept at bay. In the context of re-structures, it feeds a culture of fear. As people receive dreaded news of redundancies, self-silencing may be the effects of "winning" or "losing". Revealing the stories and conditions of public secrets is "one way of disclosing power" and making space for "a right of re-appearance as a whole subject with an independent voice, intention and passion" (Valero et al., Chap. 7). Similarly, for Andrew (Chap. 4), the "post-mortem" is "an instrument of democratic criticality" allowing him to "open out, discover, understand, move on".

Many of the chapters in this volume incorporate fictionalised accounts of the authors' own or colleagues' stories of how they are surviving academia and finding spaces of push-back. Fictionalised accounts may be necessary to protect colleagues' identities and both colleagues and writer from authoritarian power at the limits of academic freedom (Chaps. 3 and 8). Working with reconstructed stories (Chaps. 3, 7, and 8) artefacts of "writing experiments" (Chap. 6), reflexive biographical or co-produced

and multiple storylines and standpoints (Chaps. 9, 10, 11, and 13) may also aptly resist the linearity of composition[49] to better reflect the shifts in working with "a version" that does not preclude others, with living revisions and language itself that submits to and refuses arrival (Grant, Chap. 6). These approaches to speaking out and the substantive issues addressed may be seen as exemplars of the oppositional tactics of discursive-enacted resistances.[50]

Speaking out in this present volume is also important to building the collective body of research and scholarship on understanding modes of resistance under conditions of (differentiated) silencing to encourage the amplification of many voices from our differently positioned vantage points. This may avert some of the privatisation of suffering, of suffering in silence. As Clair[51] notes, in discussion of arts-based resistances, "the collective stories represent a form of resistance that moves beyond the individual's experience", opening further possibilities for resistance to oppressive managerialism and for work focused on social change.

Collegiality

Speaking out and silence are not mutually exclusive positions. Academics may maintain a silence in directing our energy to the fundamental purposes of our work. For example, Anderson[52] points to 'subterranean' resistances that take the form of selective silences[53] that are strategic or 'under the radar'. This idea captures some of the resistances depicted in this volume. Turning away from some of the bombardment, refusing to engage in so-called discussions of faculty directions or institutional strategic options, we are turning to the collegial spaces we create in teaching and research groups, informal forums or formal seminars that extend out of corridor conversations, networks of shared interest such as feminist researchers and external collaborations.

Collegial conversations are also part of our reflective practice that contributors have highlighted in terms of political empathy, hope, emotional and intellectual safety and the "will to critique".[54] Trust is important in collegial groups. The critical collegiality of a women's writing group is explored by Tuinamuana, Bentley-Williams and Yoo (Chap. 11). In a

context of having very little time allocated to their research, the prospect of committing to a writing group was an additional pressure and more "invisible work". However, this forum developed as a conducive and creative space in several ways. It provided a space to write and discuss writing in relation to academic identities, fears and pleasures of writing. As a feminist space, it was safe to reveal doubts and vulnerabilities alongside shared humour and "personal" talk. In such groups, trust and discussion deepen as reciprocal processes opened a very different, collegial accounting to one another.

Collegiality is fostered through informally organised gatherings and groups and may emerge in groups that are formally organised. The relative autonomy of these spaces is an important resource for resistance to managerialism and rehumanising our work. Collegial friendship is politically important to resisting the disqualification of certain voices within impoverished neoliberal approaches to "diversity".[55] Even though our political consciousness of our positioned privileges and intersubjectivities may sit prominently in the 'background' and may be brought overtly into our conversations and debates, academic friendships based in mutuality, empathy, fun and shared intellectual or political interests engender trust more in keeping with the professional values and social accountabilities we wish to foster. Relating through friendship does not mean erasure of difference and may enhance our criticality in other ways, through listening and learning about political dynamics of collegiality.[56]

Collective Work

In many universities in the contemporary milieu, some of the key supports to organised resistance have been eroded. In the Australian context the legal constraints on unions have hampered academic organising and the labour movement more broadly.[57] However, the press to closure of non-economic university purposes has not been able to block the collective space; and the shifting configurations of research value and impact does provide openings that can be exploited. This is particularly the case for "community-engaged" research. The neoliberal university needs to keep this space open as it connects into reputation which is necessary in

competing for students; and is necessary to a large proportion of "applied" and "translational" research that, albeit colonised into academic capitalist purposes, overlays existing projects that aim to produce public goods and contribute to processes of decreasing social inequalities. How academics may resist the press to commercialised research that effectively marginalises or prohibits working with organisations that cannot readily access necessary funds or delimits reciprocal academic-community capacity building, remains problematic. Some ways our contributors have grappled with these issues include deliberate design of projects in "*co-discovery modalities*" so that it cannot be conducted in other than participatory mode (Westoby and Shevellar, Chap. 10) and resists the imperatives of fast turnaround projects. "Personal" and collegial interrogation of our resistances may also strengthen commitment to collective research and community collaborations, as they provide greater clarity about what is being resisted and how the interrogative processes enable that clarity to emerge. For example, Westoby and Shevellar (Chap. 10) examined connections between dialogical inquiry and resistance to "extractive" research.

Scholactivism[58] or scholarship in/with activism endures in many forms and cannot be shut down because it is appropriated in the cause of reputation enhancement (eg., marketing the academic esteem of public intellectuals) and can be harnessed to ranking performativity. We also exploit the positioning of 'community' in market categories to find more ways of moving closer to allies. There are many fine examples of collective research centres that emphasise participatory collaboration (eg., City University New York Public Science Project; Sydney Social Justice Network, The University of Sydney; Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne). Additionally, academics are using online platforms to forge new projects and modes of scholactivism (eg Media Action Research Group, Lakehead University). These collective community-focused projects are especially important if cultural democracy is to have a meaningful and substantial place in the university and impact on 'real-world' inequalities.[59] Spaces for community dialogues are created through exploiting dominant discourses such as innovation and entrepreneurialism for knowledge production that is "socially useful, democratically distributed and relevant to solve the growing damaging conditions of the

world"[60] and provides opportunity to bring cultural integrity and dialogue into decision making and social action.[61]

Most importantly, we recognise that it is the collective that provides conditions for speaking out and taking action both within and beyond the university. To our knowledge it is a rare individual who can rely solely on personal courage to take an oppositional stance and be vocal in university forums without the backing of collaborators, including those who provide quiet solidarity because they are targets or for other reasons are unable to be more vocal. Academics whose voice is a "cracked record" calling for fair, democratic processes may be dismissed as complainers or incur more insidious "horizontal hostility".[62] As Heath & Burdon[63] argued, collective academic activism includes strategies emergent from subjectivities and counters competitive individualism in market logic. Heath and Burdon also emphasise the responsibility of activism within the university and, as we have seen in these chapters, the collective validates subjective protest, renews critical resilience and maintains a focus on equity actions.

Of course, local communities, partner institutions such as schools, health and social welfare agencies are not outside the grip of neoliberalism and marketisation. Williams (Chap. 14) argues that maintaining a focus on public and collective good requires alternative discourses and practices. Based on Freire's theory of emancipatory practice, she analyses her work with university colleagues and community partners in terms of struggle and "collective dreaming", anchored in community knowledges, memories and vision and working through processes of consciousness raising and building solidarities. Williams argues that community alliances "must challenge the hierarchies in/of education and democratise and politicise our relationships with each other, our students and communities". Similarly, Kelly (Chap. 13) invokes the values of her teaching and unionist biography in bringing knowledge and feminist praxis of the past into teacher education classrooms of the present, to analyse common institutional pressures of teaching and teacher education and possibilities for change. Weaven (Chap. 12) articulates the cultural value of poetry in pre-service teacher education, arguing that engaging with poetry through Freirean understandings of literacy not only subverts the narrow conceptions of literacy in standards-based measures but is a means of students

developing understanding of how neoliberalism works in education and the teaching profession. It is thus another mode of conscientisation. In these three chapters, the contributors illustrate the complex work of cultural praxis in its encounters with power requiring time, trust, and political commitment to struggle. Feminist networks and union solidarities are critical to such collective resistances (Bottrell and Keating, Chap. 5).

The collective work of *Courting Blakness: Recalibrating Knowledge in the Sandstone University* (Foley et al., Chap. 9) is an exemplar of contesting privilege on multiple levels. Projection of Aboriginal artworks onto sandstone walls contested possession of the imagery of Aboriginal people carved into the Great Court and the very materiality of the sandstone quarried in Aboriginal country. The project asserted Indigenous knowledge and creativity in confronting the denial of dispossession and displacement of Aboriginal peoples and cultures. This public art installation curated by Fiona Foley involved eight Aboriginal artists, a project team and academics from fourteen disciplines who embedded the project in curricula, thus directly reaching over 800 students. The installation and symposium attracted many across the state and beyond Queensland and created a unique archive that remains a valuable teaching and research resource. It was a project of consciousness raising and social justice "of eroding white possession as a non-negotiable prerogative erected against Indigenous sovereignties in Australia and other settler-colonial nations" (Chap. 9).

Concluding Thoughts on Resistance and Privilege

Reflecting on the themes of the book, we highlight the project of cultural democratisation that we signed up for in academic work. Oppressive work conditions in the neoliberal university elicits resistances for survival, tactics mainly of self-management in order to do our *jobs*, to have adequate time, respect and freedom from bullying, pointless accountabilities and dollar-driven 'standards'. Alongside, often in tension with everyday resistances, we emphasise scholarly values, priorities and

accountabilities. Speaking out, collegiality and collaborative work are necessary practices for "common good" university purposes to be realised, including emancipatory education and development of critical citizens,[64] knowledge serving the public welfare[65] and "social solidarity, social relations based on universal human rights and equality of respect".[66] In many ways, critical pedagogy, collegiality and creative, community focused collective work has morphed into resistance, as opposition to the market imperatives with which managerialism bombards us. But there are further tensions embedded in resistance as relations of privilege.

Academic privilege is associated with the self-governing university when the 'ivory tower' protected academics from the state, the business world and often communities as well. Academic service to externally commissioned projects was regulated by professional, legal and ethical codes that were not driven by conditions of the open market.[67] This was a protected space, understood as necessary to academic freedom of inquiry and a buffer to state and commercial vested interests. Yet, as Forsyth[68] argues, the passionate dedication to Enlightenment 'truth and reason' often produced 'harmful knowledge' that perpetuated inequalities. Privilege of the ivory tower variety was also a product of scarcity that reflected the distribution of higher education and higher degrees and in this sense was always elite privilege. Since the era of radical campus politics from the late 60s, these notions of privilege have been contested and dissent reasserted as necessary to democracy. However, privilege as 'ivory tower' distinction, whilst differentiated by stratified staffing structures[69] and proximity to the market,[70] both of which are re-masculinising the university,[71] may temper justified protest and contribute to self-silencing. This may occur through similar processes of responsibilisation that evoke individual success, failure and 'resilience' (Bottrell and Keating, Chap. 8). This discourse of privilege may also inhibit amplification of 'shopfloor' resistance because it presents scholarly work tinged with elitism, as more than 'a job' that warrants a discourse of 'exploitation' and political struggle around working conditions and workplace culture.

Both privilege and resistance accrue personal costs, not the least of which may be a constant struggle between them in our everyday academic work. For precarious academics, Coin asks whether passionate academic work "can lead to personal fulfillment or rather entrap them in an

abusive relationship chronicled by costly sacrifices and uncertain prospects".[72] Considering oppressive managerialism in terms of abusive relationships seems apt when we see resistances for survival, including 'under the radar' strategies, leaving the relationship and doggedly 'hanging in there'. Whether passionate privilege is personally and politically fulfilling, in serving cultural democratisation, is a matter of positioned negotiation, individually and collectively and subject to the institutional power of re-masculinised, strong-armed managerialism.

We do not underestimate the recouperative capacity of neoliberalism in appropriating academic logics and discourses, as has been the case with social inclusion. As Petersen & Davies[73] explain, the neoliberal university drew in radical academics to its agenda through the opportunity to influence the institutional framework, subject to their willingness to perform and succeed on neoliberal terms. "In this way, previously marginalised subjects, once categorised in terms of their gender or their sexual preference, could make the new university work for them".[74] Similar appropriation has incorporated Indigenous and "border intellectual"[75] projects toward decolonising and cultural democracy. These processes extend beyond issues of representation and participation, reaching into academic self-determination and merging with managerial lines of performativity. For example, Mat Jakobi (Chap. 5) explains how the provocations of his critical pedagogy as an Aboriginal teacher educator are domesticated by whitestream colleagues and students as well as institutional study templates. A deeper confrontation with the realities of genocide and persistence of settler-colonial "White possessiveness"[76] is repossessed institutionally through the priority of student reviews that demand a less provocative and more performative "pedagogical tour".

The various collegial and collective projects discussed by contributors are important resistances to rampant managerialism, neoliberal economic logic and accompanying lines of cultural closure that replace democratic workplace processes with radical individualism and privatised accountability. But they constitute no 'perfect offering'[77] to the project of cultural democratisation. There are cracks in our resistances, striated by privilege, necessitating further "frictions" to unsettle ways of seeing, to bring to light conflicting and contradictory positions of privilege that may be oriented toward cultural equality and democratising knowledge and work-

place decision-making, yet also shed light on the deeper unfinished work (Foley et al., Chap. 9). Cohen's reflection is relevant:

> The thing is imperfect and, worse, there is a crack in *everything* that you can put together – physical objects, mental objects, constructions of any kind. But that's where the light gets in… It is with the confrontation with the broken-ness of the thing.[78]

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