FAST CAPITALISM

An Interdisciplinary Journal

Volume 17 • Issue 2

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Fast Capitalism is an academic journal with a political intent. We publish reviewed scholarship and essays about the impact of rapid information and communication technologies on self, society and culture in the 21st century. We do not pretend an absolute objectivity; the work we publish is written from the vantages of viewpoint. Our authors examine how heretofore distinct social institutions, such as work and family, education and entertainment, have blurred to the point of near identity in an accelerated, post-Fordist stage of capitalism. This makes it difficult for people to shield themselves from subordination and surveillance. The working day has expanded; there is little down time anymore. People can 'office' anywhere, using laptops and cells to stay in touch. But these invasive technologies that tether us to capital and control can also help us resist these tendencies. People use the Internet as a public sphere in which they express and enlighten themselves and organize others; women, especially, manage their families and nurture children from the job site and on the road, perhaps even 'familizing' traditionally patriarchal and bureaucratic work relations; information technologies afford connection, mitigate isolation, and even make way for social movements. We are convinced that the best way to study an accelerated media culture and its various political economies and existential meanings is dialectically, with nuance, avoiding sheer condemnation and ebullient celebration. We seek to shape these new technologies and social structures in democratic ways.

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* We invite contributions on these and related issues. Some papers will stick close to the ground of daily life and politics; others will ascend the heights of theory in order to get the big picture. The work we publish is both disciplinary and interdisciplinary, bridging the social sciences and humanities. Culture and capital are keywords. We are also interested in cities, the built environment and nature, and we encourage people who theorize space to submit their work.

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On the Current Situation: Normal Violences, Pandemics, Emergencies, Necropolitics, Zombies, and Creepy Treehouses?

Jeremy Hunsinger

Introduction

Universities are meaning-making machines, much like everything else in the knowledge ecologies of late capitalism. They are full of people and things, creating a plurality of meanings and interpretations, and eventually developing knowledge. With that in mind, each university signifies a plurality of purposes to many different public and private interests. These ideas and interests are caught contemporarily in a nihilistic acceleration(Hunsinger 2011a). This acceleration complicates their capacity to be meaningful knowledge systems to many possible participants because the speed erases the possibility of the distributed cognition needed for knowledge(Hunsinger 2009).

The argument put forth in this paper is that amongst the many stories against the transformation during the pandemic, a few are illustrative of a pervasive neoliberal necropolitics arising in universities. This necropolitics is extraordinary violence be perpetrated within and through the university. The structure of this violence and these stories is dialectical, and the resolution in its synthesis is one of capitalistic exploitation.

Contexts

COVID-19 is our glocal coronavirus pandemic infecting many and killing some. The current coronavirus is an unperfect accident of neoliberalism(Huber 2016; Prudham 2004; Virilio 2007). A vital element of this context is the shift of costs and risks to individuals, preferably future individuals. Another critical aspect of the situation is the transfer of political control and the control of risk and benefit to corporations in what Ulrich Beck called subpolitics (Beck, 1997, 1998, 2000). In this case, questions of hazard around the production and distribution of food enabled the risk of a pandemic virus to manifest as real. The realized virus, which causes the human disease COVID-19 amongst other syndromes, is contagious and seems to be most successful in dense populations such as universities. Significantly, COVID-19 kills some of the people that socially oriented societies such as universities seek to protect. The percentage of deaths varies overall, but in some populations, it can be quite high, and inarguably any death of a community can be traumatic and tragic.

In universities, trauma and tragedy are especially problematic because one of the central

narratives of the university is hope for the future. Death is ultimately the end of an individual's future, and all hope related to them. Because the management of the university is necessarily now a matter of managing death and the end of hope, it is a de facto necropolitics (Ahmed 2014; Balan 2020; Gournari 2019; Hunsinger 2019).

The framework of the university now requires necropolitics, we must consider the possibility of deaths of students and ourselves, and we have to balance risk against the value of the university, the university degree, and related matters. To teach our students, we must consider endangering them or perhaps killing them unless we engage only online, and then by choosing online, we must have considered the risk of killing them or us. Teaching in the university has become necropolitics, whereas before there was an implicit politics of hopeful futures, now there is the added promise of injury and death. COVID-19 is not the first-time risk like this has presented itself, but it is the largest to date for the contemporary university and its participants.

We should not discount the event's speed in the interaction between COVID-19, nation-states, and universities. While there is speculation about the pandemic's origination at this time of this essay, there was evidence of something happening in January. Canada and the United States reported their first cases in mid-January(Canada 2020; News 2020). The first Canadian Universities closed in the middle of March after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic(Nielsen 2020; Sawyers 2020). Even with the pandemic declared, various constituencies and expert groups conceived the risk of COVID-19 as 'low,' it took some time before different models indicated possibly significant effects due to the natures of neoliberal or socialized medical systems.

COVID-19 projects another set of meanings into the university context. COVID-19 fits into a narrative of neoliberal crisis. In any crisis, various interests seek to exploit it. In universities, these interests are internal and external, usually oriented toward reconstructing the university from one of knowledge sharing to knowledge privatization(Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 1997; Hunsinger 2006; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004). Neoliberalism is the hegemonic ideology of markets seeking to privatize and marketize all things, especially risk(Harvey 2011; Mirowski 2014; Mirowski and Plehwe 2015; Wilson 2018). Universities center on knowledge and knowledge generates risk as risk can obtain from nearly any knowledge. Controlling and privatizing risk is an essential agenda item in neoliberal university governance. However, neoliberalism is under attack itself by thousands of uncomfortable little stories(Lyotard 1989). Neoliberalism is not performing well for the masses. Millions of life-stories are beginning to attest to problems arising from the policies, and the pandemic theoretically brings the number of stories into the billions.

Moreover, the outcomes of neoliberalism, such as austerity and wealth concentration, currently frame our life-stories. In the case of COVID-19, the explicit necropolitics of neoliberalism become apparent with stories questioning the universities' nature, mission, and the university experience. Universities are playing the language games of neoliberal necropolitics by trading the possible deaths of students, faculty, and staff against the goods involved in their brick-and-mortar/face-to-face institutionalization (DeLetter 2020; Fain 2020; Flaherty 2020; Lyotard 1984; Quintana 2020).

In the university context, neoliberalism parades as pursuing efficiencies, assessing the excellence of faculty, producing anxiety in the faculty/students, justifying the investment in education and holding the university accountable for their spending(Ball 2012; Berg, Huijbens, and Larsen 2016; Canaan and Shumar 2008). Neoliberal management in universities seems justifiable until one realizes just how much these strategies become the universities' missions more than the pursuit of higher learning. One of the significant impositions of neoliberalism has been the increased number of part-time or adjunct professors. Arguably/nonsensically in the neoliberal university, fewer full-time or tenured faculty will make the university more agile and adaptable to business needs in the future, and less able to resist those needs. However, the increase of precarious labor also increases the administrative workload on full-time faculty and lessens research productivity in relation to teaching productivity, thus changing the relations of knowledge creation significantly within the university system.

The systemic precarity that part-time professors face in their day to day existence is traumatic. Unionization has helped to resolve some challenges, but without all the protections full-time faculty have, such as tenure or long-term contracts, the university precariat will inarguably absorb an unfair share of the problems of the COVID-19 context.

The University in the Context of Neoliberal Normal Violence

Universities are mostly modern, physical institutions; they are real places, even if virtual, with real and virtual powers. Those powers perpetuate normal violences and the physical institution houses many forms of normal violence. Normal violence is a seemingly acceptable form of violence because of its everyday occurrence(Cerulo 1998; Dutton 2013). Usually discussed as part of domestic relationships, normal violence is a form of abuse against the other. Generalized, in society, we can see subtle and profound 'normal violence' occurring all around us, be they physical altercations, mental anguish, pervasive anxieties, emotional violences, or otherwise. Normal violence is also discussed in the contexts of terrorism, schooling, general bullying, and in the workplace(Ellwood and Davies 2010; Porras 1994; Saferstein 1994). Conceptually, normal violence entails those violences occurring with such regularity that we accept them. These violences entail an entitlement by someone or something to commit them(Dutton 2006). Normal violences are normalized differently in different ecologies, different cultures. Normal violences are justified as acceptable in different ways; some religions condone some forms of violence, some cultures condone some types, some genders in some cultures have access to some, but not others. Until they are named and resisted, normal violence persists without witness, ignored. Normal violences are rarely repressed through legal enforcement, social enforcement of norms, or similar actions. In fact, in that they are permitted, they are frequently reified as normal. Normal violences seemingly are ignored or tolerated. We ignore them until they cannot be ignored. They are simply normal violences, unexceptional, and impolitic (Apter 2018).

Labeling a violence as normal is not to condone the violence, much like calling it traditional does not condone it. Normal violence is not a good, a right, or a just happening, not that any violence can be good, right, or just. To call it a normal violence is only to say it has become part of our everyday lives and seemingly is accepted by those that live with it.

One of the immediate changes we will face in our landscapes of normal violence is the change from the violences of the physical university to the violences of the emergency remote teaching university. The normal violences of everyday gender, race, class, and other intersectional relations in the face-to-face world of the university are many; unwanted touching, staring, attention, and bullying are amongst them. Online there are many too, and they are now mediated, and the norms of the violences are significantly different, but just as problematic(Benjamin 2019; Phillips 2015; Phillips and Milner 2017; Roberts 2019; Shaw 2014). There is much already researched and known about the differences, but for the sake of this paper, we should recognize there are normal violences online, and there are extraordinary violences online. It is a fact that many of our students and colleagues will be dealing with both online and face-to-face violences in their everyday life. We must recognize the violences and traumas and act appropriately.

Neoliberal necropolitics, as with much of neoliberal politics and its precarities, are forms of normal violence. They perpetuate until witnessed/resisted, and they cause trauma; they categorize and reduce people, dehumanizing them, and worse. Neoliberal necropolitics is not the only ideological origin of normal violence either. Capitalism, racism, classism, fascism, and many other ideological or cultural systems seek to construct and operate systems of normal violence to repress and to 'free' people. The teleologies of the ideologies of normal violence all seem it identify it as reasonable or necessary.

While normal violence is frequently physical(Cerulo 1998), it need not be. It may take many forms. Universities' normal violence is frequently semiological, social, intellectual, conceptual, and occasionally bureaucratic(Hunsinger 2011a, 2019). For instance, universities, academics, and

their disciplines create hierarchies, divisions, and representations of differences amongst the knowledges and the students who aspire to them. By constructing and signaling differences, they construct social relations where students believe their grades, their major, their sorority/fraternity, and their clubs make them better or worse than other students. Universities become engines against solidarity. The ability to destroy solidarity is significant normal violence celebrated and encouraged to be perfected by neoliberal state apparatus(Evans and Goguen 2019; Harvey 2007, 2011).

The perpetuation of normal violence persists not only against people and their institutions, but also against the practices, the objects of representation, and anything containing meaning. Rapid digital transformation to emergency remote teaching, for instance, is not normal violence but is extraordinary violence becoming normal. While remote teaching seemingly needed to occur to meet bureaucratic necessities, we should not deny its violence against the system in which it exists. Nor should we celebrate the success of the emergency measures, as it would celebrating the explicit failures in which it originated. These failures were failures of foresight, planning, and management. Years of neoliberal mis/management in the form of budgetary cost-cutting, minor economic rewards as motivational constructs for online work, and similar quagmiristic admixtures delayed and confused universities and their faculties eventually leading them to be less than prepared for the eventual pandemic.

Let us be clear here: the faculty and students are the core of the university's mission and general direction. The faculty and students are the existential core of the university; without them, there is no university. Through their labor and commitment to the university, the faculty should provide direction, but the students with those professors provide additional direction. It is their labor and awareness that was distracted by the neoliberal morass of branding, budgeting, and rulemaking, which in part led to the lack of preparedness. The faculty and students managed as well as they did in the pandemic because of their capacities and not to the neoliberal and austerity policies that brought them there.

Faculty labor outside of self-determination and self-governance is exploitative labor; thus, the transition to precarity is exploitative. Exploitation is a form of normal violence. Most new faculty labors are labors brought on by the rise of neoliberalism and its financial regimes. Universities burden faculty with numerable administrative tasks, the so-called administrivia of faculty lives. While teaching, research, and service are normal duties of academia, they too have increased, diversified, and otherwise absorb more time. Like pervasive neoliberalism, COVID-19 has only increased those labors. The emergency transition to online "emergency remote teaching" courses has been an immensely costly exercise, and the costs have been born significantly by faculty and their energies. The challenges of COVID-19 to the nature of faculty time and labor are genuine. Faculty have had to change their relations to students, their university, their colleagues, and their' managers.' All these change the related intellectual and affective labors too. The care and attention one must put into the work of online teaching are profoundly different from face-to-face, but the quick transition to online modes of labor has not recognized those facets of faculty labor.

At its heart, the university is still resistant to neoliberal narratives. Universities are bound much more closely with narratives of conviviality, collegia, and communalism. Rooted in each university's contingencies of history, we should recognize the university arose before capitalism(Gray 2012; Perkin 2007). It arose much before neoliberalism, and while some universities have originated new and are designed to be complicit in neoliberalism, not all should be. The university, as imagined and practiced, is a semiosphere signifying differently to different public and private spheres. Inherently though, the university represents three public goods, some of which neoliberal ideologists seek increasingly to privatize. The distinct public goods that universities perform are education, research, and service. The university primarily forms these goods concerning knowledge, its dissemination, and creation, but like all goods, their distribution is tied to questions of equity, justice, and fairness. Universities and individual academics do have duties to these goods and to perpetuate them as part of their nature as university and

academics(Blunden 1996; Kennedy 1997; Macfarlane 2011; Schall 1988).

Both as narratives and semiosphere, universities and COVID-19 exist in a world of semiological warfare(Eco 1986; Hunsinger 2011). In this world, interests are actively warring with each other for the territories that are our thoughts, our imagination, our attention, and centrally our minds. We live within this warfare of signs, their interpellation, and their interpretation. What those signs mean, what they indicate to you, and what they indicate to others are all matters of contestation or communal closure of contestation. These signs establish as much as any algorithmic or data-based system, your reality in the neoliberal order. Being a person that has had COVID-19 or could have COVID-19 is a new false binary construction in this warfare, much like which university, and which degree is a somewhat old part of the warfare, one tied to identity and theoretically status. These semiological systems, their interpretations, and their perpetuations are all bound up in contemporary neoliberalism and the need to symbolically construct exchangeable values packaged into human subjectivities.

University Technocultures

Universities have their plural subjectivities, and universities co-construct some of those subjectivities through its use of technology. This co-construction is shared by the faculty, the information technology groups, the rest of the administration, the students, and the inter-university groups in which they participate. University technocultures have also been complicit in the neoliberal mismanagement of the university. The technocultures are part of the academic semiosphere, interacting across the university's shared subjectivities and materialities. The new modalities of technocultures that ally with online learning are embedded within the broader popular and historical understandings of the university and its contexts.

> Building the facilities of a virtual university is one piece of this new technoculture, just as the first founding of medieval universities articulated the technics of yet another technoculture tied to the scriptorium, lecture hall, and auditor. While they can throw much light upon each other, the workings of new university technocultures do not exhaust the full range of structural change occurring with informationalization in the global economy and society(Luke 2006)

It is within the informationalization and marketization of the global economy and society that universities have found the pandemic. The structural change they are facing requires them to address the populations in new ways in the current pandemic. The university technocultures also increasingly play a part in the more extensive university presentation, logo, or branding(Holloway and Holloway 2005; Hunsinger 2003). The university technocultures participate in those aspects of identity creation. The technocultural identity comes to embody a representation of the university and participate in the system of semiological warfare.

Universities have both generalizable aspects and specific aspects of their technocultures. These aspects construct relations between universities, but also between universities and their constituents. These constituents imagine the way university varies with the perspective of those technocultures. Technocultures have sought integration into the university's work but have instead become significant parts of the university's work. Faculty, staff, and students spend considerable time and effort learning these technocultures and their technological systems to perform successfully within them and to be able to do their increasingly technologically burdened jobs. While this burden is not new or profoundly different from other informationalized institutions, it does cause specific problems in the university, which is already comprised of distinctively different knowledge ecologies and knowledge cultures as found in academic disciplines, interdisciplinary fields, and transdisciplinary arenas. Most of these disciplines, fields, and arenas have their technocultures based on their knowledge ecologies and cultures. The modes of knowing within the university frequently exist in ecological tension. This tension allows them to be exploited,

transformed, or concretized in the state of exception of the pandemic.

COVID-19 has provided university technocultures an extraordinary opportunity to centralize their utility in areas where they were used but not necessarily seen as central. To some in the university, the rapid transformation of the centrality of technology is extraordinary violence, and for others, it is a normal violence.

University technoculture is escaping its bounds. Instead of servicing the masters, the technocultures are framing and becoming the masters. The pandemic has canceled the boundary-work, which was keeping technocultures bound(Gieryn 1983). However, the speed of the pandemic intervened, and emergency politics became the justification for the institution's transformation(Honig 2011; Trnka 2020). COVID-19 spread, and university life changed. This change opened a model of technological expansion that cannot be closed. More and more of university life is mediated by information technology and university technocultures. The legitimation of the transformation lacks fundamental justification beyond necropolitical neoliberal risk marketization.

The pandemic also has its normal violences and its necropolitics. We usually accept them as a normal part of the medical apparatus, such as triage, protective clothing, hospitalization, ventilation, etc. In the context of daily life, these too become extraordinary measures, but in the context of a pandemic, they become subtly normalized. This normalization is the process for extending and transforming education, a subtle normalization of extraordinary violence into normal violence. The extraordinary violences possible in online education is becoming normal violences in the age of the pandemic.

Diagnosing the Crisis

In the state of the exception of emergency politics, COVID-19 allowed the university to ignore and/or break norms and rules(Agamben 2005; Honig 2011; Short 2020). Even in the state of exception, many university administrations showed constraint perhaps in deference to faculty governance structures, or perhaps wisdom. However, in the pandemic emergency, universities could bend and break some norms and rules. They could cause violence to those norms and those who hold those norms. Some norms could not be broken, and it is illustrative to think about why. With the emergency closure of the brick-and-mortar campuses, universities had to condone some rule-breaking behavior in their classes, such as having class remotely or out of the scheduled time. Few if any universities reconsidered what it meant to finish a class or what accounted for the credit that the class represented when finished. The credit was perhaps more important than the class itself. The bureaucratic institution was perhaps more important than the teaching/research institution.

The neoliberal crisis of COVID-19 started long ago and is entangled in the devaluing of life in neoliberal necropolitics. Universities exist contrary to devaluation of life, in favor of increasing the value of life. In contradicting the neoliberal tendency to reduce people to purchasing power, productivities, and consummativities; the university is antithetical to neoliberal bureaucratic management(Baudrillard 1998; Dant 2004; Hunsinger 2015, 2019). Universities take the human being and attempt to make it a complete scientist, scholar, thinker, critic, citizen, or any valuable subject. Faced with the contradictions between the public good of higher learning and the neoliberal need to privatize, marketize, and profit from all goods, the university is caught in a global crisis in which base survival of parts of the population is more important than the goods it provided. This crisis of the university has been constructed over the last fifty years(Mirowski and Plehwe 2015). The history of neoliberalism is the constant attack on public goods and any social programs providing them in favor of the commercialization and privatization of those goods(Harvey 2011; Mirowski 2014). The current crisis is about money; the concentration of wealth, otherwise known as capitalism. Neoliberalism is centrally about capitalism and the fictions of the market. The pandemic was merely a trigger for the crisis that is transforming the

university; the real crisis is the hegemonic public ideology of neoliberalism. The crisis will not be solved by curing the pandemic either. It must be resisted based on the missions of universities as public goods.

The pandemic caused universities to cease on-campus operations or cease the use of their physical campus. The physical campus, in part, symbolizes the university's value and existence. The shutdown did not end the university's work or even the term. Instead, most universities decided to deliver their teaching online and finish relatively normally. Importantly the 'deliverable' of the 'certification' of the 'course' or 'class' needed to be completed, and the student needed a 'grade' or 'mark' demonstrating their 'completion' of the 'course,' demonstrating their 'knowledge' or 'understanding' of the material they 'learned.' In short, the university's bureaucratic imperative took the highest priority. Students needed to 'complete.' Students, of course, were under pressure to complete their coursework and progress and graduate, as they always are. They migrate on their slow march from the reserve army of capitalism to the army of production, as is a normal violence of capitalism.

As bureaucratic luck would have it, the internet exists and provides a mediated space for interactions using video, audio, text, and other media. Learning has been online via the internet in various parts for well over 40 years, mostly mapping the university's bureaucratic form and classrooms into internet-based media. Online learning has been remarkably successful, but it is profoundly different from the use of the internet entailed by emergency remote teaching. Online learning usually takes months to develop and years to perfect into a quality education by teams of professors and professional developers. Techniques have been practiced and developed over the years to deliver high-quality teaching and interaction. Granted, Mooc providers and similar companies have made models, reduced time, and perhaps found efficiencies to exploit. Emergency remote teaching initially was left in the hands of the professors with little guidance from instructional design. Worldwide, it was primarily a 'do what you can' solution, accelerated by the pandemic. Most professors did quite a bit and delivered an end-of-course experience meeting the imaginations of the students. This exercise in inefficiency satisfied the bureaucratic imperatives of the university. Universities accomplished this exercise quickly, administratively, and with limited democratic input. Students progressed, graduated, and some joined the army of production. The shared governance, collegiality, and community of the university were not spared the violence of the state of exception.

This emergency remote teaching is in/arguably different from online instruction for those attempting to maintain the difference. For those that do not want to preserve the difference, the two are the same. It is now clear to even those that resisted online education; online learning can be pursued, and credentials awarded. We should expect further investments in online learning. The argument will be made on the acclaimed successes of emergency online teaching while ignoring the myriad of failures. We have seen this argument for online learning before, and we have seen the counterarguments too. However, what we have now is the possibility of the emergency to force the change and concretize the extraordinary as normal.

The extraordinary is reifying the bureaucratic imperatives as being above or more important than the public good of higher learning. It is the privatization of the public goods in neoliberalism during the crisis triggered by the pandemic.

Emergency Remote Learning and Creepy Treehouses

Most faculty have a sense of learning that they build into their learning environments, their syllabi, and their courses. Frequently their understanding of learning is not related to learning as much as it may be related to other mental performances that have come to represent learning(Baudrillard 1994; Remtulla 2008). This problem stems from many faculty's reliance on a sense of learning modeled after their (nostalgic) memory of learning. Within their understanding of learning, many more have the cognitive bias of relying primarily on models of their most

successful learning. Some may not have reflected on the reasons for success, but a tendency persists in replicating the learning conditions and institutions where the faculty member is comfortable. These are usually traditional settings like classrooms or lecture halls with all the implications of technologies of the self(Foucault 1988). The faculty members have normalized a sense of learning and context, which might not be about learning as much as it is about them and their historical trajectories within their familiar architectures.

One example of this phenomenon is the recognition of learning styles related to modes of perception; arguing that slides help the visual learning, or that the lecture is great for aural learners. Many students and faculty still hold that some people learn better through different perception systems, and we must provide access to different models. This idea of learning styles is widely accepted and generally known to be false according to current research(Antoniuk 2019; Kirschner 2017; Riener and Willingham 2010). However, that it is shown to be false and is generally contested hasn't deterred its acceptance in practice and ideological dissemination. Student's preferences do have implications for learning, but not as learning styles. Still, many professors and university administrators believe that learning styles are real and should be addressed. They create a preference for design based on learning styles, but it is not the only problematic issue in the design of learning environments.

The construction of preferences in learning is not only the professor's preference but also related to the historically built architecture available to them to use. Hopefully, it is also constructed between their students and the broader ecologies of learning. The bricks-and-mortar university physically embodies these learning activities' shared spaces, their ideologies, and praxis, much as businesses represent ideologies and practices in their formal design. Albeit, sometimes people's spaces also embody ideology and praxis outside of and beyond their architectural limits(Bourdieu 1992). It is tough for an instructor to ignore the built-in projector, the computer connection, the whiteboards, much like it is hard for students to ignore the rows of desks, the windows, the constructed front of the room, or other arrangements of the learning space. The technologies of the classroom, as currently imagined, tend to address and reify specific questions of instructional design and learning. They tend to present expertise, tools, and knowledge in an industrial-age disciplinary ideology(Ediger 1987; Foucault 1979; Illich 1971).

Classroom design, like any technological choice, is a set of political decisions(Winner 1980). The chosen technologies exist within an ecology of meaning. The technologies signal things and audiences interpret them. What they interpret has implications for what and how they learn. University technocultures, as such, have an impact on learning, and they are not necessarily aiding higher learning, though parts of the curricula (hidden, null, etc.) are always learned.

Notably, many university technocultures have a clear tendency to reproduce the politics, affordances, and norms of the prior generation's classroom, lab, or seminar environment. Almost all traditional course management systems model the course and its related histories. For instance, in Second Life, where you can be anything and do almost anything, many universities designed buildings where students sat in front of a teacher who stood in front of a simulated whiteboard. Granted, some faculty did otherwise, building simulators of testes, pollination, and schizophrenia(Ando et al. 2011; Beard et al. 2009; Jeffers 2008). While it does take imagination and application to make such experiences for one's students, the learning outcomes were significantly higher in simulations and educational games than in the recreated classrooms. The virtual classrooms were something easy for educational technologists to build and consider within the university technoculture. They were far easier to brand, for instance than a simulation of schizophrenia, which was created by a faculty member.

The faculty and institution's retreat to comfort and familiarity is not necessarily anything other than the response of a set of highly time-pressed and stressed people. They are people bound by their limitations, trajectories, and traditions. However, they continually reproduce choices modeling the classroom and the traditional forms in which they learned. They rarely take risks, and the implicit ideology known as 'best practices' exemplifies their limits. Best practices that arose in the context of a few months of a pandemic are rarely 'best' and likely rarely 'practiced'.

Granted, the retreat to traditions and norms is the continuity of the disciplines and the performance of the signature pedagogies of those disciplines. It is also why it is tough to teach outside of one's home discipline and part of why it is so challenging to be genuinely interdisciplinary or even transdisciplinary as disciplines are the mental contexts of faculty performance, comfort, and/or familiarity of one's education. Given the differences in pedagogies and disciplines, it is strange that certain paradigms seem to be becoming paradigmatic in the age of emergency remote teaching and remote management of the university. That is the Zoom© meeting and Zoom© meeting as a classroom.

Zoom© has become the killer app of the university's remote administration. Shortly after it introduced into administration, it was introduced as the killer app of online lecturing. Anyone who has participated in enough classrooms has seen classroom zombies. These zombies are students who are completely turned off, checked out, or otherwise no longer participating in the classroom. Similarly, Zoom© zombies, sometimes called zoombies, are prevalent both in online Zoom© classrooms and in other meetings(Anon 2020; Dovey 2020). The manifestation of this human response as not being 'there' in the face-to-face classroom has been extended to not be there in Zoom© meetings. The main difference is that the Zoom© Zombie has tools to appear present and participating. Zoom© lectures and meetings are full of zombies, and many faculty might not be able to tell. Zombies are coming to embody the technoculture of the Zoom© lecture as one would suspect they would, especially those who have studied online learning, or televisual learning have seen. The talking head and even the TED talk lose its efficacy for learning after the user has spent much time coming to terms with the medium. The loss of effectiveness is because much of the pedagogy of the Ted Talk or talking head assume engagement and thought; whereas the slides and video tend to be non-engaging and unthought.

Zombies have always happened in neoliberalism, as people become parts of the productive machine (Brabazon 2016; Lauro 2017; Peck 2010). They are part of the acceptance of our mortality and the death, in part, of our capacity for autonomy. This form of neoliberal zombies is a rejection of wasted time, wasted effort, and wasted outcomes of the practice in which they are performing as zombies. The Zoom© zombie cannot 'leave' the meeting, but they must appear to be there. Zoom© zombies are much like many neoliberal zombies who cannot leave their jobs but produce much less than the hours they work. These zombies have the appearance of being at work in a service economy, which has become equated with work. Simulating work has become work(Baudrillard 1994). By using Zoom©, universities are promoting a certain zombification of our students in the name of what the university imagines and supports as a good learning environment. They are promoting a pacification of the student. They also are training a generation of neoliberal zombies for remote work.

University technocultures and design choices matter immensely. They create zones where learning occurs, but when we abandon those physical zones in times of emergency, we enter into a less determined zone(Hunsinger 2011). The zones are ordered by infrastructures and are zones of semiological warfare. The technological choice of universities and the technological choices of faculty members (if they have that level of academic freedom) are contestable in shared governance.

Shared governance rarely enters technical decisions. Technical decisions by professors and the leaders of their technocultures are informed by their knowledge, their familiarity, and comfort with the field of technological possibility in front of them. One particular metaphorical example of this is the creepy treehouse, which is sort of what Zoom© has become institutionally(Hunsinger 2019; Stein 2008). A creepy treehouse is when a professor uses their position to require their students into a technological choice for teaching or otherwise that the students wouldn't choose, and that choice makes the students feel creepy. The emergency institutionalization of Zoom© is very much along these lines. Students did not initially choose Zoom©, though they increasingly choose it due to their increasing forced familiarity with it. A more intuitively understood example of this might be something like having students visit a dance club in Second Life that the professor attends regularly. The familiarities of a dance club could be problematic in some ways. The interactions

possible might be excellent, but it could end up being very uncomfortable for all involved.

Zoom© does cause discomfort and worse for some students, as do services such as video-based exam monitoring because the creepiness is a genuine invasion of privacy. Granted, you can block out and use backgrounds and foregrounds to achieve some sort of blocking on Zoom©and other services. Still, the sense that a person has of sharing their space through video lends itself to the feeling of a breach of privacy, and in all practicality, it is. I do not think that I know of any students who would want their professors in their personal or private spaces. Similarly, I would hope professors would not want to be there.

The student's sense of relation is what changes with these interfacialities. The relations of power change, as do the ties of intimacy(Krämer and Haferkamp 2011; Livingstone 2008). Those relations in Zoom© or video monitoring are much different from the classroom. The classroom is a shared space, and for the most part, people consider their computers to be private devices and tend to use them privately. People do use computers for work. They also differentiate living spaces from workspaces and private spaces in both. Students, usually in shared housing or living with parents during the pandemic, do not necessarily have the liberty to define their spaces as workspaces and private spaces. Because of that, they are using video in their spaces will inevitably infringe upon privacy. Not necessarily intentional infringement, but positively a sensible infringement, and it will change students' relations to their learning and their machines(Hunsinger 2019).

In the end, other interfaces are better than Zoom© for privacy and inclusion. Even Second Life is better, as are the educationally oriented Open Simulators. They can also be a creepy treehouse, but they do allow much more significant privacy and control for students.

The context of time is important to consider here. The emergency accelerated migration from classroom teaching to remote classroom teaching, the use of Zoom©, and similar tools were rapid and unmitigated by deep reflection and technological investigation/consideration. We made most of these technological choices not based on best practices, but on an immediate sense of 'fit-to-purpose.' The creepiness starts with the assumptions forcing the decisions and the contingencies and continues by forcing the technological choices as required. The rapid transition and the continued rapid transition are causing, in part, choices to be made, that would and should be made differently, specifically more inclusively. While students are being creeped out, uncomfortable faculty are trying to ameliorate the situation by justifying and legitimizing their actions in an institutional and best practices mode for the university bureaucracy against the students' choices. We are creeping students out, and this is just another stress on top of many that they and we already have.

Signature Pedagogies and Faculty Time in the Normalizing University Technoculture

Teaching could be generic(Gurung, Chick, and Haynie 2009). Generic teaching would hold that once one learns to teach, and has knowledge to teach, the information can be taught. Some believe teaching to be simple like that, a set of learned skills. Moreover, generic teaching seems to be indicated in part by the generic nature of teaching tools. The classrooms tend to be generic; the online course management system is customizable but generic, the lecture is generic though recently more entertainingly so, and many other parts of the infrastructures of learning are generic. However, while to some, it seems like teaching is generic, each field and subfield has variations on the usage of things and particular ways of teaching certain foundations within it(Chick, Haynie, and Gurung 2012; Gurung et al. 2009). Teaching is very much situated historically, disciplinarily, intersectionally, and otherwise. Teaching in universities is rarely generic, which is why the theorization of artificial intelligence teaching is curious to people who teach(Castro and New 2016; Edwards and Cheok 2018; Goel and Polepeddi 2016; Hunsinger 2019; Saltman 2020).

Fields have a signature pedagogies. For instance, in my doctoral field is Science and Technology Studies (STS), STS tends to be much more constructivist in its approach to knowledge and tends to use more active-learning and student-directed learning in its classrooms than other fields. We

lead students to concepts through exercises, examples, ethnographies, and narratives in science and technology. Other fields might develop critical and conceptual capacities in different ways and end up with entirely different disciplinary perspectives. Signature pedagogies matter; they matter because they provide context to knowledges and ways of knowing that allow others in your field to recognize your knowledge. Emergency remote teaching erodes the implementation of signature pedagogies.

When faced with the pace of pandemic driven emergency remote teaching, the normalizing influences of the university technocultures will play a significant role in learning. The influence of technocultures increases more in the state of exception as faculty and students are looking to establish new norms. This search for a baseline is especially true in first-year classrooms when students are coming to terms with what it means to have a major and are beginning to develop a disciplinary or interdisciplinary approach to their field/s of study. As students transition to university, the courses they find themselves in do have lasting effects on their education and expectations. The learning of the curricula (overt, social, hidden, null, etc.), which in any class depends significantly on the students, partially has been undermined by the pastiche of the remnants of adequate andragogy into fit-to-purpose technological choices of university technocultures.

Fit-to-purpose choices are not 'good' designs; they are bandages over the wounds of extraordinary violence. Excellent course design takes time, and faculty time is already scarce. If we imagine faculty members working only the hours their contracts pay, which has been between 35 and 42 hours in the places I have worked in my career, there is just not enough time to do their normal jobs. In the pandemic, there is frequently even less time as the mediation of many factors has transformed faculty work lives, such as working at home, family responsibility, technological limitations, etc.

Faculty working conditions vary so significantly that some people will have extensive training and incredible support to accomplish technical tasks, while others have virtually no training or support. This dramatic difference can occur even within most universities as competencies, and the distribution of skills and knowledges varies amongst disciplines, faculties, and in other ways in large universities. In smaller universities and colleges, the battle is always one of the essential resources and accomplishing the tasks within a cost-savings framework. However, bureaucratic cost-saving models usually assume faculty labor and time are 'free' within the system because it is already paid in salaries. These models also assume faculty will put in the work to keep the university afloat, thus putting more pressure on faculty to do more things. Faculty time during the pandemic is an increasingly rare resource as faculty have the many tasks of neoliberal administrivia already. Between resource issues, training issues, and time issues, it should be difficult to assume that faculty can do much more than they already do. Yet in emergency remote teaching, faculty are doing more.

The social and technical infrastructures of teaching provide a normalizing politics and ecological field. The universities' commitment to their infrastructure prevents many faculty members from realizing their models of learning. Faculty want to create the signature pedagogies and andragogies of their disciplines. They want their students to be given the best education from their discipline as they understand it. The technicities and university technocultures do not always allow those andragogies/pedagogies and sometimes actively prevent it. Pandemic signature pedagogies will be mediated by emergency remote teaching in the state of exception. The normal violence of university technocultures imposes an extraordinary violence upon pedagogy and any hopeful attempt at andragogy.

Conclusion

While this essay used several examples, these examples are illustrative of thousands of stories happening at universities worldwide. The stories demonstrate the university's normal violences

are changing. The politics are changing, and the pressures on faculty are increasing. The university does feel the pressure, too, as it exists in ecological tension with the faculty.

In the university system, the most substantial relationships in the university are between faculty and students, and it is where the grossest politico-ecological tensions exist. The two groups should be in solidarity, but the pandemic is yet another tool for neoliberal politics to drive them apart. The relationship between those two groups has become mediated by neoliberal necropolitics; their relationship permanently transformed. Universities could return to the position of biopolitics containing the hope for the future. Still, there has been a permanent trauma inscribed into the current relationship. Each of our lives has become part of a series of economic measurements about our death and others. This new relationship has reduced the members of the university by integrating them as calculable risks.

Transformations like this have happened before, with events such as the Virginia Tech Massacre(Agger and Luke 2008). But while those events were local, and the localities resolved them. The current pandemic is glocal, and the distributed ideological shift is harder to resist.

In other parts of the current situation, our lives and workplaces have been molded to the state of exception and emergency politics, and the outcomes of molding are becoming entrenched in university technocultures, institutional politics, and university governance. The system had to change. But it changed to meet the needs of neoliberal necropolitics' bureaucratic imperatives. This change undermines the relationships, research, shared governance, and learning that we seek to develop in university.

Corporations and governments with neoliberal agendas are taking strategic aim at universities in this pandemic. Choices are being constrained, and bureaucratic imperatives are being promoted over higher learning. Money is being made from universities' and individual faculty decisions in ways that will beget new forms of normal violences in the pandemic. People are being exploited. Privacy is being exploited. Learning and research are being exploited. They are being exploited to meet the exigencies of neoliberal necropolitics. Exploitation has become a normal violence. The expansion of this normal violence should be resisted by shared governance. The extraordinary violence of the death of higher learning should be avoided at all costs.

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The Pandemic Preferred User

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The technology departments of Australian universities have a model user for their technology offerings. Throughout this paper, we describe this construct as the "preferred user." Preferred users generally represent what some perceive to be the main cohort of students, who study full time, have access to good technology and the time and capacity to solve their own technology problems. Kao and her colleagues profile the preferred user student as one who is studying full time, financially stable, able-bodied, and neurotypical (Kao et al. 2020). The construct of the preferred user does not reflect the struggle other student groups, including people with disability, can have with using university technologies. Constructing the preferred user as the normative position becomes disabling to marginalized and excluded students, who make up an increasingly large proportion of the student body. But there is hope, and it comes in the form of lessons we've learned in higher education since the COVID-19 pandemic began. As people stayed home and students became totally remote learners, we learned that technology modifications for people with disability can benefit all users. The pandemic experience has made it clear for disability activists and faculty staff that it is time for the preferred-user profile of our universities to change. It is time the preferred user looks more like the non-preferred or disabled user, so technology systems can be inclusive to all user groups, not just the "preferred" or normative students.

Since the 1990s, Australian higher education equity policy has maintained an aspiration towards proportional representation. While proportional representation is a political concept when used in educational policy, the goal is to ensure the make-up of a student population reflects society as a whole. As stated in a 1990 discussion paper entitled A Fair Chance for All (Department of Employment Education and Training, 1990, p. 2), the overall objective for equity in higher education:

> **... is to ensure that Australians from all groups in society have the opportunity to participate successfully in higher education. This will be achieved by changing the balance of the student population to reflect more closely the composition of society as a whole.**

The experience of university students with disability differs from non-disabled or "typical" students because of additional structural, attitudinal and physical or digital barriers (Moriña, López-Gavira, & Molina, 2017). Despite this, the number of students with disability enrolled in tertiary education is steadily increasing throughout the world (De Cesarei & Baldaro, 2015). A university education offers people with disability the opportunity to improve their employment and participation prospects. For students with disability to be successful they may require additional support, sometimes in the form of digital technology.

As we found in our research with students with disability using digital technologies before the pandemic, digital does not always mean accessible. As one participant explained, lecturers often offer inaccessible pdfs as required reading in university-library online reserves:

So they all go, oh everything's available on the library, but because it goes through an external website, that external website blocks for plagiarism, I can't read it. And they go that's an essential reading, it's available to everyone, it's on the Internet. I can't read it. The lecturers have no idea what I'm talking about, no matter how many times you tell them, I actually can't read that part because if you cannot copy it and paste it, the text to speech readers can't read it. (McRae, Ellis, & Kent, 2018)

In this example, preventing students from copying-and-pasting the document, therefore potentially preventing plagiarism, is valued above providing access to students that rely on screen-reading technology. We imagine that many lecturers likewise followed this strategy when rapidly moving their units online during COVID-19. An article published on Inside Higher Ed expressed concern for students with disability in the rush to online learning prompted by COVID-19:

> Students who are deaf or hard of hearing, have low vision or are blind, those with learning disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or a physical disability that requires use of a computer keyboard instead of a mouse, students with mental illnesses or various other challenges, have been put on the backburner "en masse," as instructors scramble to transfer two months' worth of teaching content to a digital format (Anderson, 2020).

These accessibility issues are exacerbated because of forced moves to online but are not unique to our experience of education during the pandemic. These issues are instead a continuation of the difficulties always faced by this cohort. This paper draws on critical disability studies to offer a conceptual and theoretical analysis of a deeply problematic aspect of the rapid move to online education in response to COVID-19: the reliance of notions of the preferred user. The preferred user is simply the type of person technology creators or institutions envision using their product or service. Within critical disability studies the preferred user is often recognized as white, male, and able bodied (see Ellcessor, 2016). In other words, the preferred user often excludes people with disability and other forms of disadvantage.

We begin by drawing on the social model of disability to offer a redefinition of disability as located in social practices before reflecting on how education can be redesigned using digital technologies to be more accessible for students with disability. The paper then introduces the historical disconnect between students, staff, and support services in the university context before considering the ways some Australian students with disability are provided digital devices as an academic accommodation. Following this, specific issues for students with disability studying online are examined. A key site of exclusion in this context is the notion of the preferred user, an issue we examine with reference to both university operations before and during the COVID19 pandemic. We chart the ways these already existing issues have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the opportunities that have also arisen, focusing on how captioning as an accessibility feature is also viewed as a vital learning tool by online students. Finally, while the forced shift to online learning during this pandemic has the ideal potential to accommodate "non-preferred" users, the actual roll out and delivery of online learning is still defaulting to modes that are both difficult and challenging, and in many cases exacerbates existing issues and inequalities. We conclude with suggestions about how a consideration of the non-preferred user might actually be the preferred approach for all.

(Re)defining Disability

In the last two decades disability has moved from the medical domain into rights-based discussions. With the adoption of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) by 180 countries, access to education, along with a number of other sites of social inclusion, has been recognized as a human right. According to article 24, state parties

should:

> ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, State Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities. (United Nations, 2006)

The CRPD also foregrounds the importance of digital rights and the use of digital technologies to enable 'persons with disabilities to fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms' (Preamble to United Nations, 2006). For many university students with disability, digital technologies are a key site of support and reasonable adjustment. However as we discuss in this essay, this is not always a straightforward notion, there are a number of factors at play that disable students who have an impairment.

In using the terms disability and impairment in this way, we draw on the social model of disability, a framework developed in the UK in the 1970s that posits that disability is the social reaction to the effects of impairment (Finkelstein, 1975). According to the social model, disability is the restriction of activity imposed on top of people who have an impairment (Oliver, 1996). This model is effective in shifting the problem of disability from an individual's body and locates it within a society constructed to exclude that particular body. Society can, therefore, be redesigned to be more inclusive. While this paper proceeds from a social model of disability, we have elected to use the terminology students with disability as it is the established best practice terminology in Australia, the country in which we live and work.

Through the construct of the preferred student, universities have excluded students with disability; however, its important too to acknowledge the advances that have been made. For example, a number of specialised technologies exist to compensate for the effects of impairment in an educational context such as braille displays, voice recognition, teletext communication and use of vibrations (for a full list see Raja, 2016, pp. 8-9). In addition to these technologies specifically designed for the disability community, a number of inclusively designed mainstream digital technologies also offer flexibility and inclusion to students with disability and those without such as:

- Ebook text size can be increased depending on the student's needs. Images can be read aloud through tagging tools. Access to print-fidelity page images can mean students can follow along in lectures, page by page.
- Online learning management systems allow students to study anywhere, anytime.
- Screen readers and dictation software allow students to access course materials and complete assignments.
- Smartphones enable app-based and learning-specific modifications based on disability and personal use parameters, including touchscreen functionality, geolocation for campus navigation, and real-time updates that affect online and offline accessibility.

This list contains technology that has been designed according to the principles of inclusive design. Inclusive design refers to the design of products and or services that can be used by the majority of the population without the need for special adaptation or design. Inclusive design designs for edge users or non preferred users in order to capture the broadest possible user base. Inclusively designed digital technologies offer students with disability increased flexibility and accessibility of learning, and greater control over the disclosure of their disability to both fellow students and teaching staff, a feature highly valued by this cohort (Roberts, Crittenden, & Crittenden, 2011).

Disconnect between Students, Staff and Support Services

Students with disability have long faced a number of difficulties in higher education. Despite meeting the same entrance requirements as students without disability, fewer students with disability successfully complete their degrees and graduate (Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, 2019; Easterbrook et al., 2019; Fleming, Oertle, & Plotner, 2017). This is in spite of the increased presence of disability support services in universities and greater efforts to raise awareness of disability more generally. Some of these difficulties begin from the point of enrolling in a higher education course. In order to receive approved, systemic support, universities generally require students to disclose themselves as disabled. The less inclusive the built, social and technological design of the university, the greater the need for students to disclose. This often involves significant paperwork and bureaucracy, not to mention emotional cost. Processes require students to justify why they are worthy of accommodations, which can result in the student feeling both disempowered and defined by the label of their disability (Adefila, Broughan, Phimister, & Opie, 2020; Langørgen & Magnus, 2018). This process is premised on the assumption that the student is already aware of their disability and has a diagnosis, that they are capable of and willing to self-advocate, and that they are aware of the various accommodations and assistance they are entitled to (Fleming, Plotner, et al. 2017; Langørgen and Magnus 2018). This is also an approach that focuses attention on providing accommodations for the student's disability, thus reinforcing a normative non-disabled experience of higher education. An inclusive design approach by comparison, recognizes that not all students fit into the preferred user construction and an incorporation of digital flexibility benefits the entire student cohort.

Students also report that despite negotiating appropriate supports with the disability office, the disabling attitudes of individual teaching staff can have a negative impact, for example, on whether they feel comfortable using assistive technology in class or if course content is made available in an accessible digital format (McRae et al., 2018). These attitudes are no secret - academics have gone as far to publish opinion pieces on why students with disability should not be given accommodations (Pardy, 2017). The notion that people with disability gain advantage via deception or exaggerating the effects of their impairment has a long history and has been examined in depth by social model disability theorists (Barnes, 1992). While a full discussion of the impacts of individual professors' attitudes is outside the scope of this paper, we mention it here to highlight the systemic nature of the issue.

Although there is evidence that students with disability who feel well supported tend to perform better in higher education, disability support services often struggle with inadequate resourcing leading to the proliferation of cookie-cutter support plans that lack the personalization required to meet students' needs (Fleming, Oertle, et al., 2017, pp. 314-315). Teachers working with such support plans have little awareness of the complexities of the student's disability or understanding of their individual needs (Kao et al., 2020). As mentioned above, staff can sometimes be ambivalent towards the needs of students with disability, even prior to the pandemic, "triggered by conflicting roles and values, unclear outcome measures to evaluate the students, a lack of knowledge of how to accommodate, time constraints, insufficient institutional support, as well as a lack of openness regarding students with disabilities" (Langørgen & Magnus, 2018). These can lead to negative experiences that leave students reluctant to further self-advocate for the support they require (Fleming, Oertle, et al., 2017; Fleming, Plotner, & Oertle, 2017).

Further, there are also difficulties with institutional approaches towards students with disability, which too often tend to reflect limited perceptions of disability. Efforts to address accessibility issues at universities have primarily focused on physical access to campus spaces and facilities (Bialka, 2018). This approach not only centers focus on visible disabilities, limiting awareness of the prevalence and range of non-visible disabilities among the student cohort, but also ignores the educational experience itself by focusing on access to spaces (Kao, Tay, & Woods, 2020). By requiring students to self-advocate and negotiate complex bureaucratic processes for what are often inadequate accommodations, institutions appear to be oblivious to the fact they

are forcing students with disability to divert their time and resources away from their education itself. A study of Canadian higher education institutions indicated that disability service providers wished for many improvements relating to accessible information and communications technologies (ICT) (Fichten, Asuncion, Robillard, Fossey, & Barile, 2003). Seventeen years later, accessible ICT remains a significant issue for disability support in Australian universities and digital technologies can be both enabling and disabling (Ellis & Kent, 2011; Goggin & Newell, 2003), particularly when intersectionality is considered (Alper, 2017; Ellcessor, 2016).

Australian Students with Disability ICT Use

Australian students with disability are sometimes provided with digital devices as part of their academic accommodations. For example, in one study of students with autism in higher education in Australia, a student discussed being provided with a computer to help with note-taking and to avoid handwriting legibility issues (Cai & Richdale, 2015, p. 36). However, there can be issues with the provision of ICT in these situations as students are often only permitted to use the devices for narrow purposes (Alper, 2017), despite the fact that non-specialised software and digital devices can actually be the most commonly used and most helpful assistance for students with disability (Fichten et al., 2013; Heiman, Fichten, Olenik-Shemesh, Keshet, & Jorgensen, 2017).

For example, the simplest ICTs can have significant benefits for students, including allowing a greater degree of self-determined learning. Furthermore, where ICT conforms to the principles of universal design, the benefits can be extensive for both students with disability as well as those students without (Rose, Harbour, Johnston, Daley, & Abarbanell, 2006). Heiman et al. (2017) examined student perceptions of ICT used by teaching staff in a traditional, face-to-face higher education institute in Canada and a distance or blended learning higher education institute in Israel. The researchers found only partial support for their hypothesis that students with learning disabilities across both institutions would use more ICTs compared to students without learning disabilities. All students found ICTs useful – "most of the students (with and without disabilities) are using the computers for assignments, including grammar and spell-checking, graphical organizers, calendars, etc., which were considered as accommodation tools for students with disabilities" (Heiman et al., 2017, p. 2738).

Furthermore, when students are provided with properly accessible digital formats for learning materials, they can customize their use without having to request specific accommodations (Belch, 2004, pp. 12–13). This has the additional benefit of assisting students with undisclosed or not formally diagnosed disabilities who would otherwise not receive formal accommodations. Previous studies have shown that a significant number of students, particularly when studying online, will choose not to disclose that they have a disability (Kent, 2015; Roberts et al., 2011).

Specific Issues for Students with Disability Studying Online

Given that online delivery of higher education courses is increasingly common, it is also worth exploring whether there are factors that particularly influence retention of online students. According to a study by Muilenburg and Berge, some aspects of the technological experience such as technical skills, cost and access to the internet, and technical issues, were significant barriers to student success, although they were not as significant as non-technological aspects of the online experience such as administrative/instructor issues, social interactions, academic skills, learner motivation, and time and support for studies (Muilenburg & Berge, 2005, p. 38). Although this may seem as though non-technical aspects of online learning are more significant factors, all of these factors can be ultimately mediated through ICT in an online learning environment. However, the research also shows that a one-size-fits-all approach cannot be taken. A 2016 study into students

with disability studying fully online through Open Universities Australia found that different impairments had different needs – students with vision- and hearing-related impairments had the most problems with learning technologies, while those with mobility impairments and mental illness were impacted more through non-technical factors (Kent, 2016).

In order to address some of these issues, a Quebecois study by Fichten et al. (2013) involved compiling a list of ICTs that experts believed would benefit college students with learning disabilities and then asking those students which ICTs they actually used. The researchers found key discrepancies between the expert recommendations and student realities. Firstly, a lot of ICTs experts thought would benefit students with learning disabilities were not actually used by those students. Secondly, "students reported using smartphones/cell phones/iPods, MP3 players, and instant messaging as productivity tools; these are general-use ICTs that the experts did not mention. Clearly, students and experts need to share their perspectives about ICTs that could be useful" (Fichten et al., 2013, pp. 184-185).

The Preferred User Student

The concept of the preferred user, as explained by Elizabeth Ellcessor, "reflect idealized access conditions, which are normalized as defaults around which policies and technologies are regularly formed" (Ellcessor 2016, p.77). She argues that perceptions of the preferred user invariably default to able-bodied notions of ability and access, for example, "at the physical, embodied level of use, preferred user positions encourage sitting—at a desk, with a laptop, the user's body folded and seated—and gazing at a lit screen, using fine motor skills to type or control a mouse" (Ellcessor 2016, p.76).

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, higher education largely operated with an assumption of a "preferred user" student. In exploring a parallel concept of the "ideal student," Wong and Chiu explain that while assumptions of what constitutes such an ideal student may vary according to the context of the institution or discipline, there are certain characteristics that are broadly homogenous and are both structurally and unconsciously privileged within higher education (Wong & Chiu, 2019). While such thinking may operate at a distant and abstract level, it nonetheless perpetuates a culture of normalcy within higher education that "reproduces thinking that non-traditional students are non-white, working-class and/or disabled" (Madriaga, Hanson, Kay, & Walker, 2011, p. 901). Such perceptions of an ideal student or preferred user are rarely explicitly discussed or even acknowledged by higher education institutions as they run counter to the now widely accepted equality agenda: "that ability should be able to access opportunity regardless of circumstance" (Brink, 2009, p. 4). A more cynical reading of this lack is that open discussions of the preferred user student are avoided as they could negatively impact an institution's position within a competitive student market. The problem with this though, as Wong and Chiu explain, is that they nonetheless pervade and influence the way higher education operates and such "unspoken assumptions and expectations of students offer limited guidance to develop as university students, especially for those from non-traditional backgrounds"(Wong & Chiu, 2019, p. 9) . By avoiding open discussions about the preferred user student, we are enabling a higher education system that focuses on getting students in the door, but once in are expected to conform to a system that provides inadequate recognition or allowance for their difference. A better and more open understanding of how assumptions of the preferred user operate within the higher education context will play a significant role in enabling an educational experience that is truly universal and accessible.

Speaking in reference to media generally, Ellcessor explains that shifts to newer platforms where issues of universal access have not been fully considered, presume "a default abled user" (p. 31), and thus can work to further disable people who had previously established other forms of access (p. 31). In the case of the forced shift to online learning prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, some students with disability lost access to their learning that had previously been

supplemented by accommodations such as in-class assistance, technology, or support services. This loss worked to further situate them as disabled.

While the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated issues for students with a disability, it also created difficulties for other students who did not fit the preferred user student default: students who were studying part-time while working, those who had significant carer responsibilities, international students who lost their jobs and lacked access to government welfare, students with English as a second language, and international students unable to return home.

Captions for All Users Broadens the Scope of Digital Disability Access

While the COVID-19 experience has presented issues, there are also opportunities. For example, accessibility features such as captioning for people with disability, or non-preferred users, have been beneficial to all students trying to work from home and juggling competing priorities. This was the main finding of a study we conducted before COVID-19 and the finding took on greater resonance as large number of students found themselves studying from home and handling competing domestic priorities.

In order to better evaluate the potential uses of captions among an entire student population, we had offered captions to the mainstream student population of all Curtin University students enrolled in 11 digital and social media, screen arts and fine art units offered in study periods 3 and 4 in 2018. These students were invited, via email, to participate in a short online interview to discuss their understandings of captions and reflect on the ways they could potentially be used in their future teaching and learning. A total of 53 students from the 22 units offered over the two study periods participated in these interviews. Some students participating in the interviews self-identified as being from at-risk groups, including being hard of hearing, having English as an additional language, and having sensory-processing difficulties.

The student interview was designed to identify current and anticipated expectations regarding captions as a pedagogical tool. Questions were grouped into four main categories— students' current usage of captions in online lectures, the potential benefits—and therefore the likelihood of using captions—if they were made available in other units, their expectations regarding caption accuracy, and the impacts of (in)accurate captions.

Several prevalent themes and experiences regarding participants' views on the educational benefits of captioned lectures became apparent across the interviews. We found that students with and without a disability have diverse learning styles and used captions alongside a variety of other learning tools in ways that suit their visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic approaches to learning. These students expected captions to be available in online lectures because they are so widely available and embraced in entertainment media (see Farley, 2017; Kehe, 2018). These students also multitask while accessing lectures, and therefore see captions as a way to retain focus and improve clarity. They also believed that the provision of captions improved the quality of teaching in an online environment. On a practical level, these students used captions for insight into the correct spelling of technical words when they might be unable to ask a lecturer during an in-person class.

They expect the university to provide any tool that may enhance their learning and believed captions should be accurate. The students we spoke to were dealing with complex visual and audio material in online lectures. They stated they not only needed to know what the lecturer was saying, but were also simultaneously trying to read the slides, make the connection between the content on the slides and what the lecturer was saying, interpret the lecturer's body language and movement, and decipher all of this in the context of the course itself.

These two quotes are indicative of the kinds of comments students made about captions being a vital teaching and learning tool:

> As I am an online student, all of my lectures are online. I sometimes view them multiple times. I will stop

> the lectures if required while I am taking notes, and sometimes replay sections if I have lost my focus, missed the main points or have difficulty understanding what the lecturer is saying. I usually watch/ listen to the lectures in our home office which is separated from the rest of the family, however, I can be interrupted by the teenagers living in the house if they want attention.
>
> [I prefer] captions over sounds. With sound/audio, some accents can be hard to distinguish words. Some lecturers have monotone voices and can make a subject quite uninspiring. Audio is harder to use at night while [my] husband is sleeping, and I want to study.

During the pandemic, all students were online students who were potentially experiencing these or similar issues. While the forced shift to online learning during this pandemic had the ideal potential to accommodate "non-preferred" users, the actual roll-out and delivery of online learning was still defaulting to modes that were both difficult and challenging, and in many cases exacerbating existing issues and inequalities. Yet the example of captions shows how a consideration of the non-preferred user might actually be the preferred approach for all.

Conclusion

As COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, universities acted quickly to move their core business of teaching and research online. Classes shifted to platforms such as Zoom, Webex, Collaborate, and Microsoft Teams and teachers and students alike were expected to adapt. And they did. While there has been much discussion of the unpaid labor involved in making this shift and the difficulties inherent in merging work, study, and domestic life, there has been little acknowledgment or analysis of inherent notions of the preferred user in this rapid shift to technology.

Within the context of higher education, the preferred user student can be identified as one who is studying full time, financially stable, able-bodied, and neurotypical (Kao et al., 2020). In other words, we default to assuming that students are: able to prioritize their studies as their main focus without other significant demands on their time; that they have a secure source of income sufficient to meet their living needs and otherwise free up their time to focus on their studies; that they can easily access the spaces and resources required for their studies and participate in required activities; and that they are able to confidently engage, communicate, and cope with new and complex social situations. Any variations to this default assumption are dealt with via relevant accommodations by the university. For example: if the student has work or carer responsibilities, then they are encouraged to enroll in a part-time load; if the student has a mobility impairment that restricts access to certain venues, then the class is shifted to a more accessible venue. Such accommodations serve to reinforce the preferred user as the default norm for the university experience.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we can also add "technologically connected" and "digitally literate" to our perceptions of the preferred user student. In the rush to move courses online, many institutions, teachers and instructors fell back on such a default assumption of their students. Not only did the shift to online learning require students have access to adequate internet services and suitable technology devices, but they further assumed that students would be sufficiently familiar with and competent in negotiating new digital scenarios such as the large and sometimes confusing online synchronous sessions that replaced face-to-face classes. This shift also highlighted the limitations of existing accommodations for students with disability. Lectures moved to online recordings without appropriate provisions for captioning, interpreters and notetakers did not always have access to webinars, class materials were not always provided in advance to allow students sufficient time to prepare, and neurodiverse students reported difficulties focusing during online synchronous class sessions (Wilson et al., 2020). Mental health issues were exacerbated by the stresses associated with the shift to online learning, which in

turn further compounded the broader social pressures and concerns wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic more generally (Wilson et al., 2020).

While the preferred user student, as outlined in this paper, may be the default, it no longer accurately represents the reality of the 21st-century student cohort. This is a fact that universities need to acknowledge as they look to re-establishing a sense of normalcy in the post-pandemic world. We need more inclusive methods, processes, and systems of education that will not only benefit disabled students, but the increasingly wide range of students who do not fit the preferred user student mold.

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Contemptible Safety: Coronavirus and the Moral Value of Universities?

Mary K. Ryan

The onset of the coronavirus created a national panic in the United States. Learning as we go through this new global pandemic has called for fast thinking and quick choices. Emergencies demand action. For many reasons, not the least being the need to protect against large group gatherings and keep students and faculty safe from contracting COVID-19, educational institutions, especially colleges, sent students away from their on-campus learning, living, and other activities, and shifted to online learning. As the scores of special issues make clear, how governments and institutions respond to emergencies offers vital lessons. After all, emergencies do not exist as occasions that suspend our moral principles. Quite the opposite, the way that administrators and leaders handle the unexpected, the extraordinary, and the exceptional demonstrate their true values. I suggest that neoliberalism paints the academic landscape in a way that cultivates a sense that we are being managed, but not informed. This leads people to a position of feeling like strangers who are alienated from their own choices, control over their lives, and like cogs in a machine of progress as usual without intentionality, commitment, or passion. In this way, the academic response to COVID-19 crushes people by uncivilizing them, similar to what has evolved in the prison industrial complex. Fighting neoliberal control of universities and prisons, two institutions intricately wound up in molding minds, must always be a moral challenge. The construction of strangeness reflects the role of morality (specifically through the interchange of compassion and contempt) in negotiating contemporary social and political spaces. In this essay, I first look at the ways in which moral psychology uses emotion to demarcate civil limits. Then, I outline how one major issue in social justice, the prison industrial complex, exemplifies the transformation of identity into strangeness and strangers, justifying harmful public policies. Lastly, I contemplate how theorist Lauren Berlant's philosophy of cruel optimism enables us to better understand institutional politics and individual sovereignty. Ultimately, I argue that universities must remain places for moral democracy to grow, but this demands a transition from contempt to compassion, suggesting that individual connections are the real pathway to social justice, not a reliance on institutional or structural powers.

Numerous university responses to COVID-19 include teaching directives that seem to assume faculty possess equal ability to carry out their tasks. For many—especially contract/adjunct faculty, differently-abled faculty, and women, and disproportionately women of color—the pandemic has presented new childcare, eldercare, and homeschooling, and mental health challenges. These inequalities would likely be exacerbated by university proposals that include a hybrid or dual delivery model, where some students in a course come to a physical class and others work remotely. This echoes Wendy Brown's discussion of how neoliberalism warps social and political policy and figures citizens as rational economic actors in all spheres of their lives. Brown states that neoliberalism:

> Entails a host of policies that figure and produce citizens as individual entrepreneurs and consumers whose moral autonomy is measured by their capacity for "self-care"-their ability to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions, whether as welfare recipients, medical patients, consumers of pharmaceuticals, university students, or workers in ephemeral occupations. (694)

This mode of "self-care" demonstrates a potential risk of universities leaving students—along with faculty and staff—to figure out how to adapt without appropriate supports, and even without considering whether adaptation is even an appropriate risk with surging levels of contamination and potential death and illness to members of campus communities. Self-care models of policymaking and university practice treat people as products, creating a kind of precarity that matches Lauren Berlant's concept of cruel optimism, as I'll discuss later in this article. While everyone at university is impacted by COVID-19, not everyone is impacted in similar ways or to equal degrees. Unless universities accommodate faculty who are less well-positioned to transform to remote teaching, equity gains, already a tenuous claim, will be lost more readily, leaving those faculty fragmented from the university community, in turn diminishing the solidarity academic institutions need to be welcoming spaces for all students and staff. Although scarcely discussed overtly, teaching models and plans for managing coronavirus at colleges are inseparable from affect and ethics, which frame so much of our community values. University politics in managing COVID-19 can result in some people treated as strangers. Hard Feelings: The Moral Psychology of Contempt outlines how contempt functions as a marker of civility's limits (Bell 2013). Biopolitics feeds on this endpoint of civility's limit, risking a kind of rationality in decision-making that neither seeks nor supports truth nor accountability in university actions. Without unanimous federal protocol and guidance, the higher education system can devolve into a competitive regime of subjective choice around how it manages COVID-19. As such, colleges and universities can be considered actors in the politics of the broader neoliberal order, albeit within the general framework of biopolitics. I suggest the management of the pandemic in higher education is consistent with how Michel Foucault discusses neoliberalism in his classic lecture on The Birth of Biopolitics. Accordingly, I understand neoliberalism to be a regime of subjectification geared towards the production of presumably resilient subjects—like faculty, staff, and students—capable of adapting to the neoliberal mechanisms of production, exploitation, accumulation, and dispossession. In this way, higher education demanding a return to the classroom or face-to-face learning (without sufficient health measures and precautions, including but not limited to mandatory facial masks, temperature testing, disease testing, social distancing, and cleaning), and not creatively and fully preparing for the use of virtual learning platforms (which have shortcomings, but being directly at risk of disease transmission is not one), is a produced crisis. It is understandable that universities and colleges face budgetary shortfalls after sudden operational changes upon the wake of the pandemic. But settling the question of if students and families will front thousands of dollars for a subpar virtual learning environment while sacrificing the health and care for the university environment is not the best answer. We do not need to be in this position. There are choices, but not in this neoliberal mindset and socio-economic order. Disasters—be they from pandemics, political upheaval, or environmental causes—will likely strike higher education again in the future. Although the impulse to re-open and return to old ways is understandable, it is irresponsible to survive by getting by. Overcoming this neoliberal trap requires imagination and preparation for the future, which secures a place for equitable communities. In a recent essay, Honor Brabazon raises an important consideration of how neoliberalism might threaten university practices in the wake of COVID-19. Brabazon observes that:

> A guiding principle of neoliberal thought is that citizens should interact as formal equals, without regard for the substantive inequalities between us. This formal equality makes it difficult to articulate needs that arise from historical injustices, for instance, as marginalized groups are seen merely as stakeholders with views equally valuable to those of other stakeholders (2020, para 8)

Such artificial homogeneity can be alienating. When higher education prioritizes reopening above human life, it suggests that the material product of the university itself and the commodity of education alone, are more important than the lives of those who operate and benefit from the machine. Worse, if these discussions omit nuanced analysis of different populations and how they have been historically treated and impacted differently, and how they will fare differently moving forward without diligent care, institutions of higher education risk perpetuation of longstanding inequity at the expense of just remaining on life support. Alienating people by drawing divisions for the sake of profit preserves the legacy of institutional racism, but on a more grounded level, it has serious concerns for the community and the presence of the stranger. For example, racism creates the stranger through a process in which affective expressions are undergirded by repeated expressions of contempt, causing the racist to entrench a lack of desire to see other people as they are and for what they deserve. As such, the existence of strangers implies important questions about otherness that underpins racism: What does a person deserve by being a person? How does the denial of personhood exclude? And what is lost by being a stranger? Contempt—and related emotions like anger, fear, and disgust—are avenues people sometimes employ to answer these questions, which perpetuate the existence of strangers because they motivate disengagement, thus tearing at the fabric of society and fracturing interpersonal relationships, institutional access, and structure of governmental regimes. The Moral Emotions contends that "as guardians of the moral order, [contempt, anger, and disgust] all…. motivate people to change their relationships with moral violators." (Haidt 2003, 859) More to the point, anger, disgust, and contempt can lead to punishing, blaming, and ostracizing those who are seen as unworthy of deeper compassion and care. Deeming someone a stranger assigns a moral judgment, and the action of scapegoating strangers often follows. In other words, in a sociopolitical landscape, strangers are not just another synonym for people; instead, they signify a special kind of person created to justify forthcoming institutional, political, ideological, or structural measures. It is important to consider the chance that whatever reforms are adopted to manage the pandemic could linger into the future. Inclusive, compassionate measures now bode better for meaningful long-term measures. After all, outcasts and othering are not accidental; such actions signify extensions of moral preferences that are sanctioned by scapegoating. This is not to suggest that the experience of strangeness is without complication. People are indeed sometimes torn between personal feelings and a sense of loyalty to systemic pressures. In Responsibility for Justice, Iris Marion Young describes modern life, especially in urban areas, as characterized by the deliberate repression of human sensitivity. (2013) This sort of willful disconnection allows some to distance themselves from others who are victims suffering from injustice even when it is immediately occurring before us. If we demean or humiliate others, we can justify that those individuals are undeserving of our compassion, in turn holding no claim to our assistance or charity. The risk of purely remote teaching does not simply end with restructuring how students learn. Removing students from supported higher education and turning into a model of education that could undercut faculty and staff supports has greater risks. A belief in the superiority and unequal stature of others who seem strange can suppress instincts toward pity, creating a psychological gap between members of the same society.

The existence of punishment and contempt of people in society suggests that strangeness presumes an appropriate code of conduct has been violated. In this way, strangeness raises crucial considerations about political efficacy, especially in democratic governments and university decisions of how to best educate during a pandemic Strangeness troubles participatory governance and collective decision-making, and more broadly nationalism and patriotism, because it distances people from the ability to influence effective solutions to societal problems. In fact, the creation of strangers transcends infrastructure, resources, and policies altogether, suggesting individual people themselves are the problem. Strangeness breeds contempt by instilling fear into us that strangers will never **not** be strange. The strange can carry ideological weight, as evidenced by the way whiteness undergirds public policy through structural racism. White supremacy sabotages the inclusiveness of all races, perpetuating domination through messages and delusions that people of color as strange, and strangers are to be avoided. This echoes what is crafted by "the

racial contract":

> One could say, then, as a general rule, that **white misunderstanding, misrepresentation, evasion, and self-deception on matters related to race** are among the most pervasive mental phenomena of the past few hundred years, a cognitive and moral economy physically required for conquest, colonization, and enslavement. And these phenomena are in no way **accidental**, but **prescribed** by the terms of the Racial Contract, which requires a certain schedule of structured blindnesses and opacities in order to establish and maintain the white polity. (Mills 1997, 19; capitalization and emphasis original)

This foundational premise of whiteness frames contemporary sociopolitical encounters and how people encounter each other. In a way, racism can be viewed as the manifestation of the polity of whites' feelings that non-whites are strange. But it surely seems to extend to other identity types, like gender, sexuality, class, and religion, as well. Acknowledgment of broad categories of otherness becomes actionable as othering. Scapegoating is transmuted into oppressive policies, indifference, and intolerance, which bear devastating consequences—not the least of which is the further justification for the entrenchment of ongoing strangeness. Once contempt is established, it seems to expand like a self-fulfilling prophecy or an ever-nurtured feedback loop. As Mills intimates above, strangeness can serve to justify and preserve political ideologies and governmental projects, including higher education responses to COVID-19 that seek profit preservation above human life.

We need not wait for the risk of university failure to COVID-19 to see public policy failure. The prison industrial complex is one example of how identity politics of race, sexuality, gender, and class complicate public policy. The effective understanding of incarcerated individuals in society as being wholly immoral people —not simply people who have committed immoral acts— often leads to prisoners being depicted as a particularly strange subgroup of the population. The citizenry at-large is painted a skewed, incomplete, and dramatic picture of prisons. Towards this end, anthropologist Lorna Rhodes describes prisons as an "absent site." (Rhodes 2001, 65) Prisons and criminals are not represented by mass media in their entirety, nor do mass media portrayals represent real life in prison. Instead, mass media circulates themes or images which trigger and reinforce feelings and beliefs which resonate with the public, based on their preconditioned depictions: violence, prison bars, and uniforms. For example, consider the best-selling video game Prison Tycoon 4: Supermax, which presents this tagline as a challenge to consumers: "Build a profitable privately-run prison from the ground up. Grow your facility to Supermax capabilities, housing the most dangerous and diabolical criminals on earth – all for the bottom line." Such stereotypical fragments, layered on top of the latent philosophies of power and whiteness described in the preceding paragraphs, are used to sensationalize prison life by invoking and engraining racialized and xenophobic fears. Identity politics reveals the isolation and punishment of the other or the stranger. Nations sometimes build policy around the maintenance and sustained construction of what Charles Mills's outlines as a racial contract, and ultimately, the prison industrial complex is an example of this bigoted mindset. The prison industrial complex thrives on the ability to cordon off certain citizens and illustrates a way people respond to others that are different from us or that we hold contempt for within society. If we are not careful, higher education risks to replicate this disposability model in the name of profit alone.

The risk of an ever-present stranger arising from emergency remote learning and an already robust prison industrial complex evokes Lauren Berlant's writing on cruel optimism. Cruel optimism comes about when individuals remain attached to "conditions of possibility" or "clusters of promises," which are embedded in desired objects or ideas, even when those same objects or ideas inhibit people from acquiring or fulfilling such items or promises. (Berlant 2011, 23 and 24) Berlant groups unachievable fantasies of the good life into four categories: promises of upward mobility, job security, political and social equality, and durable intimacy. (Berlant 2011, 3) These four criteria constitute what liberal-capitalist societies claim people must possess in order

to make life add up to something. With the emergence of othering and strangeness support, the problem is that society can no longer provide sufficient opportunities for individuals to achieve such flourishing. Berlant's primary inquiry is into these fantasies of the good life, and she spends much of the book grappling to understand how and why individuals cling to false promises. The role of institutions is implicitly woven throughout Berlant's book. Most directly, she uses the phrase "precarious public sphere" to delimit the site upon which cruel optimism is played out. (Berlant 2011, 3) In this space, we see "an intimate public of subjects who circulate scenarios of economic and intimate contingency and trade paradigms for how best to live on." (Berlant 2011, 3) Berlant presents a politically-motivated concept of the historical present as a means to understand what forces are responsible for whatever urgent crises have taken hold. She does not fully develop objections to specific institutions that she deems culpable for the calamities she examines; instead, she broadly hangs her argument on liberal-capitalist societies in Europe and the United States. For this reason, it seems Berlant agrees with Bourdieu's claim that the state has a monopoly of power to carry out both legitimate and symbolic violence. Bourdieu observes that "state bureaucracies and their representatives are great producers of 'social problems'" (Bourdieu 1994, 2), and such "social problems" are reflected in Berlant's examination of "precarious bodies, subjectivity, and fantasy in terms of citizenship, race, labor, class (dis)location, sexuality, and health." (Berlant 2011, 3) Bourdieu, drawing on Weber, argues that "the state is an X (to be determined) which successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical and symbolic violence over a definite territory and over the totality of the corresponding population." (Bourdieu 1994, 3) While Berlant does not make the connection to Bourdieu that is being drawn here, and thus never declares these allusions to state control directly, she nevertheless ensconces Bourdieu's logic by placing total blame on the state for the "retraction of the social-democratic promise of the post-Second World War period in the United States and Europe." (Berlant 2011, 3) Bourdieu and Berlant go hand-in-hand, illustrating the effect of fractured state policies and state violence practiced on a population in the context of social norms of optimism.

If society is to rescue the stranger, and we are to revitalize the love of the strange in a way that can advance unique personal contributions rather than anonymous knowledge hoarding and assimilation, I argue it must move beyond state policies and state violence into a discussion of sovereignty. Berlant seeks to move beyond structure, agency, and disruption into a new mode of analysis, which examines "adjudication, adaptation, and improvisation" amid the status quo, what she dubs "a crisis-defined and continuing now." (2011, 54) Although Berlant does not extrapolate universally, she does seem to suggest that no one can escape an affective mediation with the historical present: "there is no place sufficiently under the radar to avoid the insult that the world is not organized around your sovereignty." (2011, 85) Personal identity is intimately associated with sovereignty, as "one has only been loaned a name and biography and personality and meaningfulness, and that that loan could be recalled not just by death but by the cruel forces of life, which include randomness but which are much more predictable, systemic, and world-saturating than that too." (Berlant 2011, 91) Despite the power of the strange to seep into governing principles, it seems the avenue toward mitigating or diluting its power must be derived through interpersonal trust.

Humane treatment amidst neoliberal institutions is not guaranteed to any of us. Compassion is a choice that social justice demands we cultivate. The pandemic pushes colleges, universities, and other partners to step back and question things like: What are the changing needs of schools, students, and parents? What is needed now and what will be needed in the future? How can we scale our work to best meet these needs? What would best benefit marginalized communities? When people fear how universities might (likely) respond to COVID-19, they fear the pervasiveness of neoliberalism, which leaves people to be managed, stockpiled, and puppeteered. There is no ethical value to keeping universities open, in a virtual platform or a brick-and-mortar space, if they become void of morality and just exist to line the pockets of system presidents and trustees. The emergency response to the coronavirus reveals what we value. Universities are vital to a democratic society, helping to teach students the value of critique and cultivate educated, aware,

and ethical citizens. Eschewing community, collaborative decision-making, and compassionate choices would leave a moral void which will sour what remains of our democratic society long after this particular pandemic is conquered.

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Panic Learning off (and on) the Covid Campus

Tara Brabazon, Jamie S. Quinton, Narelle Hunter

I Told You So. By Way of Introduction. (Tara)

I am a five-foot two Australian woman working in the humanities. I am accustomed to be ignored, mansplained, marginalized or described as 'wrong' or 'too theoretical' or 'naïve' in multiple languages. But on this singular occasion, my predictions were correct. Completely and saturatingly correct.

My first full-time academic post was in 1994, in Aotearoa / New Zealand. Large lecture theatres. Huge student cohorts. I was a junior, contract staff member that fulfilled the housework functions of a traditional, conservative history department. Moving through a series of contract roles, I was tenured by 1998 as I started to teach online classes in addition to on-campus and distance education modes. As early adopters of e-learning, my colleagues and I were left angry, manipulated, deceived and exploited, enduring third-rate learning management systems, incompetent 'leadership' decisions about teaching and learning, no funding and ridiculous timelines. It was dreadful. The entire e-learning movement at this time can be captured by a t-shirt slogan andragogy: "get it online." The 'it' is important to identify. 'It' was content. No time nor expertise were given to explore the relationship between form and content, ponder interface management and multimodality, universal design, deficit models of teaching and learning, the availability of hardware and software in regional, rural and remote locations, or the information literacy of academics or students. "Get it online" was the crow call. Because of a lack of professional development, this strategy failed. Compliance dominated. In the rush to 'get it online,' study guides and syllabi were saved to PDF and uploaded. Live lectures were recorded and posted online. Substandard content began filling and clogging learning management systems without carefully developed born-digital objects. Poor lectures – and poor lecturers – were revealed, amplified and enhanced through this process. Academics had not complied. They had not innovated. Instead, their lectures were automatically recorded and their study guides were digitized. This was the online learning revolution that never happened.

I was angry. I am still angry. As an Australian woman working in the humanities, anger is my primary socialization. It then translates into rage, frustration and bitterness. I am an academic that – alongside my disciplinary expertise – also completed Bachelor and Master's degrees in Education. To this day, it amazes me that academics teach without any formal learning in how to do so. Certainly, some lunchtime seminars or a graduate certificate sands off the roughest of edges of incompetence. But the construction of curriculum, backward mapping, multimodal materials that activate diverse approaches to learning outcomes for diverse student cohorts, require more learning and professional development than is possible through a session on "how to create a rubric."

I was so angry that fury bubbled out of my classrooms and online learning fora and onto the page. My first two monographs were relatively normal in topic and theoretical frame for a cultural studies academic. Tracking the Jack (2000) investigated the diverse colonization histories of Australia and New Zealand. Ladies who Lunge (2002) summoned feminist popular cultural studies. But the third book was cooked by rage. Digital Hemlock: Internet Education and the Poisoning of teaching was as pointed as the title suggests. Fuelled by Socratic idealism, I expressed the scale of the online learning disaster. The incompetence. The waste of money. The lack of learning. Inspired by Stanley Aronowitz's The Knowledge Factory (2000), I also signified the changes to the university workforce through casualized online education. This book was shortlisted for a writing award, picked up some citations, and the title has continued to circulate. An array of keynote addresses and articles followed and the titles indicated the hypocrisy in the content: "We've spent too much money to turn back now" (Brabazon, 2011).

After Digital Hemlock, online teaching and learning became more diabolical, underfunded and oversold. Indeed university 'managers' gave up on academics who they had not bothered to train or scaffold through professional development. A new group emerged in our institutions: "educational designers." This invented profession would take 'content' and – you are ahead of me, dear reader – "get it online." The loss of expertise – or disciplinary literacy if we summon this provocative and important phrase – was profound. Concurrently, the library profession was losing its credibility and position at the very moment that information literacy had never been more important. From this context – with the arrival and popularity of Google, Wikipedia and the grandfather interfaces of social media – The University of Google was published (Brabazon, 2008). Anti-intellectualism and a disrespect and denial of reading and writing were added to the critique. The lack of learning in e-learning was summoned with horror, anger and disgust.

Although my rage was not intended to manifest into a trilogy, Digital Dieting (2013) was my Return of the Jedi. Dark, resolute, melancholic, and meaningful, this book was written in temporary accommodation amidst a volatile moment of my career where I worked in three universities in three different countries over a three-year period. This personal and professional horror movie pounded with the dull thud of the mediocrity and incompetence in university leadership structures. As the Global Financial Crisis revealed the failures of neoliberalism in the rest of the economy, it remained the blood of higher education. Quality assurance replaced quality. Compliance replaced excellence. Teaching was the housework of the university, completed by women, the precariat workforce, and those who rarely attracted large grants for their research.

Through this trilogy, the untheorized, underprepared drumbeat of online learning was documented. With students becoming consumers, buying their degrees, rubrics automated assessment. But questions of 'value' and the 'services' being delivered for those fees remained in question. The movement to online learning was convenient and efficient for the delivery of content, but the scope and scale of the learning enabled was much more ambivalently constituted and evaluated. With the movement to rapid, panic learning through COVID-19, the 'choice' of face-to-face delivery was removed. Online learning was cut-price content delivery, enabled by casual, cut-price academics (Farrelly 2020). What this personal, professional and research narrative introduces is the two decades of 'getting content online' without attention to the professional development of staff, attention to the hard work required to develop authentic born-digital objects, the funding required for infrastructure, and clear and research-driven evaluative protocols required to assess effectiveness. The history of online learning in our universities is defined by a lack, an absence, a marginalization, a void. From this history, COVID-19 entered our campuses, portals, and platforms.

The University of Disaster (Where Tara Updates Virilio with Less Christianity and More Zombie Foreboding)

The COVID-19 pandemic has shattered international higher education like a crazed window pane. With movement restricted and then stopped through the first few months of 2020,

academic and administrative staff rushed to convert face-to-face lectures, tutorials and laboratory classes to a screen-based environment. Scholars probed whether universities were ready for this rush to digitized education (Houlden and Veletsianos, 2020). Significantly, this concern was expressed by Houlden and Veletsianos in The Conversation. The thousands of refereed articles and scholarly monographs probing the flawed history of online learning were ignored. Instead, academic journalism restated the obvious. As I argued in the first section of this article, online learning has been in crisis for two decades. Digitization has been over-sold and under-used. Inexperienced and underdisciplined students have been medicated by online learning to hide their lack of skill, information literacy, or commitment.

With the onset of COVID-19, universities in crisis only had one option: panic learning. With the loss of international students – and the revenue that they bring – the change to online environments had to be introduced at speed, throughout all disciplines and with no funding to enable the expeditious implementation. Indeed, this accelerated movement to online learning was a desperate act for institutions, rendering redundant many of their staff because of severe financial hardship. Already weak universities, located in regional environments, were most impacted (Henebery 2020).

To summon the word 'postmodernism' in a university is the equivalent of saying 'herpes' outside of it. One of the great tragedies in the history of the humanities, particularly when it is tangled with the history of higher education after the Second World War, is how complex ideas are labeled, demeaned and dismissed because they do not slot into a specific model or mode of funded research that is 'industry ready,' impactful, and easily understood. 'Postmodernism' became the rubbish bin for difficult ideas that required complex and specialist reading, often in languages other than English, and attacked the easy hierarchies assembled by white English and American humanities scholars who attended specific universities, published in particular journals and served as defiant – if ignorant – gatekeepers of the disciplines. Meanwhile, 'theory' and 'theorists' have become marginalized in favor of the empirical and empiricist.

The clustering denial of complex ideas and the labeling of the difficulties have left universities historically unprepared to manage myriad critiques from indigenous communities, citizens of color, the widening participation agenda, and multiple layers of government. Floating through the market economy without a vision or purpose, universities were not ready to manage changes to teaching and learning, a loss of funding streams from international students (Marshman and Larkins 2020), or the shredding of public finances to pay for shutdowns, lockdowns or a global health crisis.

If the humanities and theoretical social sciences had maintained a stronger profile and intellectual spine, their impact in criminology, media studies, cultural studies, socio-legal studies, politics, architecture and leisure studies would have moved more effectively to other disciplines (Redhead, 2004a, 2004b, 2008, 2013). However, what is important, and recognized by Smith, Clarke, and Doel after the Global Financial Crisis, is that although postmodernism was an intellectual bin for those who read too little and speak too much, Baudrillard's research survived this label (Smith, Clarke and Doel 2011: 326). Therefore, the capacity for Virilio to be reconfigured after his death was ripe and ready. Virilio was more than a scholar of speed, just as Baudrillard was never a 'denier' of the Gulf War. Instead, we re-activate the theorist of the bunker (Virilio 2009c), the accident, the disaster, and the oblique. He remains a provocative and infuriating intellectual of the extremes (Gane, 1991, Redhead, 2011, Coulter, 2012). If COVID needs a theorist – which it does – then the claustropolitan university has found its intellectual guide in Paul Virilio.

Virilio was a theorist of endings or, to use his word, "finitude." The Aesthetics of Disappearance (2009a) and Grey Ecology (2009b) all fed into Virilio's conceptualization of the University of Disaster. L'Adminstration de La Peur was published in 2010, later translated as The Administration of Fear (Virilio and Richard, 2012). Climate change was his focus. His short books continued with Le Grand Accelerateur, translated into English as The Great Accelerator (Virilio, 2012). The Global Financial Crisis was the focus of one essay in his collection, with

another pondering the death of a private life, and the third pondering the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, noting the risks of these experiments on humanity. He probed if CERN had a right to create a black hole (2012, 85-88). What Virilio affirmed, particularly after Baudrillard's death, was his separation from French intellectual culture. His social distancing was of an intellectual kind. He constructed and claimed a defiant space. A gap. A separation. An intellectual bunker. Hauntology. The ghosts of the failures of online learning congealed around the COVID campus.

To explore and grasp the COVID campus, Paul Virilio remains the scholar of record. The University of Disaster (2010) is the argument that frames and shapes our experience, expertise, and trajectory. He confirms "the sense of insecurity" (2010, 4) and the "acceleration of 'realism'" (2010, 4). But further, he presciently demonstrates the role of COVID in our present: "the accident that now replaces all events" (2010, 4). The present is uninhabitable, managing the weight and incompetence of anachronisms, dodging the un(der)funded, and unstable promises of a utopic future of the fourth industrial revolution, portfolio careers, and the gig economy. Standardization – and perhaps even standards – have been replaced by the "synchronisation of sensations that are likely to suddenly influence our decisions" (2010, 6). This is panic learning. Standards, assessment, expectations, and quality assurance scatter in a frightening and frightened attack on the now. Education, teaching, learning, development - all the predictable trails and pathways to definitive and clear outcomes - are lost.

> You can't stop progress, they used to say. No, but today it has stopped all by itself, at the edge of the void, of an interplanetary abyss that puts the finishing touches on the finiteness of a geophysical materiality that once, not so long ago, supported our vitality (Virilio 2010, 132)

This dromoscopy – the destructive impact of speed on life, identity, time and our future – is a potent Virilian trope. There is no separation of day and night. The pixilated screen burns time, memory, priorities, and the differentiation of work and leisure. Digitization burns priorities, cracks hierarchies, and destroys the expectations of paid employment and family life.

Reading Virilio's monographs from the 2000s is the closest many researchers will ever get to taking hallucinogens. As he aged, the books became smaller and more intense, like a bitter expresso occupying the extremes of our palate. The University of Disaster is a monograph that has finally found its time. Importantly, when entering the next two sections of this article, Virilio's critique of 'Big Science' - or how he writes it, BIG SCIENCE - is edgy, terrific, and terrifying. The consequences of digitization and accelerated knowledge on the university are presented with their full dystopic flair in this book. Describing the university as "a hospice of science" (2010, 117), his fear – not of science but of the unchecked propulsion of crack-fuelled empiricism and progressivism – is starkly dissonant with the mantras, platitudes and desires to 'believe the science.'

> Arrogant to the point of insanity, BIG SCIENCE has become powerless to check the excess of its success. This is not so much because of any lack of knowledge as because of the outrageousness, the sheer hubris of a headlong rush without the slightest concern for covering the rear; its incredible ethical and philosophical deficit ... This is where the paradoxical project of radically reforming the university comes in, using as an excuse the failure of the growing success of BIG SCIENCE ... It would mean official inauguration of this UNIVERSITY OF DISASTER, which would constitute the indispensable MEA CULPA now essential to the credibility of a knowledge in the throes of becoming completely suicidal (2010, 118-119)

The evangelical commitment to science, like all evangelical commitments, will not end well. The 'ethical and philosophical deficit' is voided from the politicized binarized times, where 'believing the science' is the whimpering cry to counter the alt-right.

Virilio had one more thought bomb to throw onto our COVID campus. Not surprisingly, it involved not online learning, but online 'training.'

> Let's now take a closer look at this 'society of accelerating realism' as it goes into training. Ours is not yet a completely on-line society, but one where entering the virtual community is compulsory, or very nearly, and this means living in a surrogate reality that deprives us of the tactility, the physical contact and the empathy essential to communal intersubjectivity (2010, 78).

Virilio does not summon a pleasantly imagined community. Instead, this university at the end of the world is devoid of humanity, depth, and connection. This is a virus of a different kind. COVID-19 will kill millions of people. Arising as pneumonia on December 31, 2019 in Wuhan China and reported by the Wuhan City Health Committee (2019), it was spread through individuals via touch and transfer of fluids. With no vaccine, the phrase "social distancing" was used as a social medication. Institutions started to close. Businesses and workplaces attempted to continue to operate online with staff working from home. Schools and universities moved online as campuses and institutions entered a period of 'lockdown.' What was seen to be conventional or face-to-face learning ceased abruptly. Quarantined life and education had profound consequences for students, teachers, and learning, including the appearance of mental health concerns (Pragholapati 2020). Travel restrictions were put in place for 90 countries and the vast majority of them rapidly closed their borders. The everyday life of urbanity and rurality was disrupted. Everyday, learning was disrupted. Therefore, the next two sections of this article enter classrooms at the end of the world. This article is written by three researchers who have won teaching awards for innovation and excellence. Yet, in a time of mediocrity, compliance, and panic, what does teaching and learning in a university actually mean? Therefore, we enter a different rendition of Virilio's BIG SCIENCE. We enter the first-year classrooms of Biology and Physics to see the rendering of panic learning in higher education.

Panic Learning in Biology (Narelle)

Before COVID-19

2020 began as any other academic year in Australia. Students flocked to campus eager to learn and join the campus community, engaging in a range of orientation activities designed to build the student community and connection to the institution and staff. As one of two academic staff responsible for the first-year core Biology unit, I began teaching a cohort of 860 first-year students in lectures, practicals and tutorials. Natural curiosity arose around rumors of a never before seen virus originating from China. Students were asking when we would get to talk about viruses and asked if I could use this as an example to explain what they saw on the nightly news. I assured them they would learn about viruses in a few weeks.

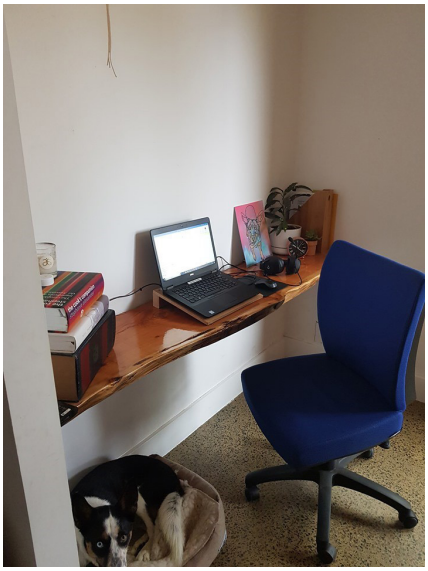
Lecture theatres were brimming with students, to the point I had to ask them to move from the stairways. Students were engaged with the content, huddling in groups to consider the problems I gave them and happy to catch the tossable microphone to answer my questions. Practicals were abuzz, with 100 students per lab investigating scientific methods by seeing how many of their peers could squeeze into a hula hoop, or if the circumference of their hands was equal to their height. They were learning to use specialized technical equipment such as micropipettes and spectrophotometers to measure the permeability of a cell membrane that they had been learning about in lectures. Tutorials were vibrant and reassuring, with small groups working on tricky concepts, supported by second- and third-year peers. The atmosphere amongst staff and students was overwhelmingly positive. Students who commented that they were initially nervous about attending were finding the environment on campus supportive and welcoming. Just two weeks into the unit, fears of not being able to cope were replaced with confidence and enthusiasm.

As the third week of the semester began, a change was felt in the atmosphere across Australia. Fear returned because of the reality of COVID-19. This fear was real and no-longer just impacting our distant neighbors. It was now on our own soil. On Monday 16th March 2020, I delivered

my last live lecture to a theatre less than half full. On Tuesday 17th March 2020, I taught my last practical and tutorials ceased. My co-coordinator and I made the decision to cease face-to-face delivery and put the physical and mental health of our students first. This was not a difficult decision to make. We value our students. Their health and well-being are paramount. What was to come was the most challenging week that I have ever experienced in my 18 years of teaching.

Responding to COVID-19

The decision to stop face-to-face teaching in first-year Biology was made quickly. In a laboratory of 100 students, with 4 casual academic teaching staff as well as me, the fear was palpable. When my co-coordinator approached me with the suggestion to suspend teaching that day, a sense of relief washed over me. Our decision was justified when the following day the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison announced that all public gatherings of more than 100 people were banned. Instead of presenting an interactive lecture in person, tossing a microphone to the audience, that night, I recorded my first virtual interactive lecture. At each point where I would expect students to work together and problem solve, I built-in questions to my virtual presentation. Students would check their understanding as the lecture progressed, pausing and answering the questions within the virtual lecture (presented as a SCORM package in the Moodle-based LMS). The first iteration was not perfect. The sound was too low as my children slept not far away. But the next lecture improved based on student feedback. I moved to a different space and focused on connecting with my students. We had previously used my dog as an example in face-to-face lectures, providing context for the interactive case studies presented in lectures. They would see my puppy in still images as we discussed the bacteria present in a dog's saliva. Preparing online lectures at home meant my puppy was curled on my lap, so she became the calming influence that students needed in a time of disruption, appearing on screen to provide a sense of normalcy and a connection to a brighter time.



The next day was spent planning what teaching the unit online could and would look like. Armed with an iPad, tripod, Go-Pro, and laptop we set out to film the practical activities that the students were scheduled to complete throughout the semester. Take after take, we captured the experiences we hoped to share with our students. Using micropipettes, electrophoresis tanks, blood typing, and more, we recorded in detail each aspect of the laboratory experience. In less than two days, we had all the footage needed to develop virtual practicals. We moved swiftly, not knowing when the university would no longer be accessible to staff. Late nights were spent designing and creating virtual simulation activities that could replace a portion

of the practical activities usually performed in the laboratory and tutorials. Simulations were created using Articulate Storyline 3 and developed around existing practical experimental data. Instead of students designing and carrying out their own experiments in class, we created a virtual scenario where they could manipulate criteria and record the resulting output. Students were able to complete the simulation at their own pace, from the safety of home and continue to record experimental data in a laboratory notebook. To support the interpretation of data and continue the completion of a traditional laboratory notebook, students then met with an academic teaching member for one hour to discuss the results and interpretation using the virtual platform Collaborate supported through the LMS.

Deploying Expertise

As a teaching specialist with formal qualifications in both science and education, part of my role is supporting other academics in the development of innovative teaching materials. Therefore, I was called upon to assist in the transition to online learning where possible. Alongside redeveloping my own teaching resources, I met with others to discuss how they could meet their learning outcomes in this new environment. Existing laboratory designs were reviewed and reimagined, tutorials reconfigured and held online. This problem was not unique to higher education. Secondary school teachers were also shifting their curricula online and were keen to connect and gather ideas to deploy in their own virtual classrooms. Academic staff were called upon to provide short training sessions in moving lessons online, with tips and tricks for keeping students engaged in learning. As educators, we have both an opportunity and an obligation to support our students and colleagues to continue learning and teaching. Through innovative practices, we have been able to provide a supportive learning environment using workable solutions to keep students and staff engaged and connected to a vibrant and supportive community that will help each other move through these challenging times.

Consequences for Staff and Students

The sudden shift to online teaching will not be easily undone. Perhaps it is time to end the traditional lecture and this may be the catalyst. There is much evidence to show that information delivery is limited by student concentration (Arvanitakis, 2014). Therefore, in a lecture theatre setting, I present material in short sections, interspersed with interactive and engaging problem-solving group-work tasks keeping students active and engaged with the content. The use of a tossable microphone enables the large group of students to share ideas and understanding, while allowing for a recorded option for those unable to attend face-to-face classes. It is possible that the transition to the online recorded lecture may emulate this experience without the face-to-face component. However, practical experiences are an integral part of Biology teaching and learning, with many educators linking the practical experiences to improved content understanding as students explore tricky concepts in the laboratory (Hamzat, Bello, and Abimbola, 2017). Field and laboratory-based learning provides unique conceptual and technical experiences that are essential for the discipline (Fleischner, Espinoza, Gerrish, Greene, Kimmerer, Lacey, Pace, Parrish, Swain, Trombulak, and Weisberg, 2017). With the massification of tertiary institutions, there has been a recent shift towards the development of laboratory spaces intended to accommodate large groups of students designing and carrying out investigative research. At Flinders University, undergraduate laboratories accommodate 100 students and five teaching staff. Additionally, rather than traditional recipe-based experiments students design and direct their own experiments known as inquiry-based practicals (Smallhorn, Young, Hunter, and Burke da Silva, 2015). These experiences rely on students troubleshooting and repeating failed experiments then analyzing genuine data sets that they have collected themselves, resulting in an authentic research experience. This has been difficult to replicate in the virtual environment.

With many students unable to return to classes, locked out through closed borders, teaching must be adapted to enable various forms of student engagement. For the foreseeable future educators may be in the position of delivering both face-to-face where and when it is safe to

do so, alongside a virtual program. Whilst this may be possible to provide in the short-term, I worry about the sustainability of this model into the future. I am tired. I see educators around me exhausted as they design curricula and deliver in new and innovative ways. I fear that this will be the new norm, as we are expected to continue delivery in a variety of modes to increase the availability of our courses to students around the globe to recoup what we can from the loss to international revenue sources. However, this duality is not sustainable. Educators cannot continue to perform under the current stresses of dual modes of delivery for an extended period. As educators, we have risen to the unique challenge posed by COVID-19, but to achieve the best possible outcomes for our students, careful thought is required in moving forward to manage both staff and student well-being. Educators have provided outstanding contributions at a significant cost to other academic work, and time will tell just how damaging this will be to the future of education research.

Panic Learning in Physics (Or, Dis/ordered Ramblings from an Overstretched and Traumatized Mind - Jamie)

The Pre-COVID plan

Physics 1A (real name PHYS1101 Fundamental Physics I) is perhaps the most challenging topic for a Physics academic to coordinate. For the teaching team, it is about coping with a group of commencing first year students with a wide range of backgrounds and skillsets, each of whom are embarking on one of many pathways and attempting – in one semester - to ensure they all face forward with a common, normalized disciplinary literacy that is equivalent to year 12 level physics (with some extensions thrown into the mix), so that they are prepared and ready to tackle first-year university physics with unfamiliar material in Physics 1B. This is, in its truest form, teaching for learning in both form and content. The attention to form requires distinctive modes of delivery and engagement and tropes of immersion and thinking. These are achieved by spending concentrated, ordered time in the learning environment. The content, which, when properly scaffolded, can be more usefully described as 'disciplinary literacy,' includes the themes, ideas, expertise, information literacy, and filters that each student needs to develop. These need to become deployable by the student, so that they know how to differentiate between sources of information, to discriminate between the valuable and the valueless, identify the invaluable, and then expertly apply their knowledge towards new form and content. This applies broadly, whether in learning or tackling real-world problems, or simply navigating and making sensible decisions in their daily lives. Put another way, educators start from their expertise and apply educational philosophy, recognized andragogical practices and information, digital and disciplinary literacy to inform their educational design and approach. Implementing the design involves the deployment of multimodal forms of delivery to achieve the learning objectives, which are about enhancing the disciplinary literacy of learners.

Physics 1A is designed as a 13-week program that continually and systematically develops these capacities in the student. Precision in the melding of form and content – andragogy and information – is a necessity. It is tough teaching and tougher learning. The learning environment has been very carefully constructed, with expectations set firmly in place, but also underpinned with support mechanisms that enable each student to thrive. This is particularly important with commencing first-year students. They need to transition into university life, which pose differing levels of challenges for each student but is crucial because they need to 'hit the ground running' and become stable learning 'machines.' This transition is by no means easy for students. University life is fast-paced and to the commencing student, it is like learning to ice-skate - to do it gracefully takes considerable familiarity, coordination, and confidence with one's balance.

Transitioning students need to make sure that they are familiar with resources and know-how to access them, but they also need to feel that they belong to their cohort. It is only after these aspects are established that students start developing their intellectual self-esteem, necessary for the effective development of learning and literacies. We start slowly because the personal

and social transitions need due attention and require to be nurtured, but in our class we build momentum and move through complex concepts that quickly stretch the student's expertise. Added to this is the notion that I, as topic coordinator and lecturer, must create this integral learning experience in the first of many building blocks of programs that create a degree. Unlike many other disciplines, physics students mostly arrive straight from secondary school into the degree program. The role of the 'teacher' in the eyes of students carries assumptions from school that can be unproductive in universities. My role is to highlight what the students are required to learn. The responsibility for each student's learning, one that is usually associated with 'the teacher,' now lies firmly on their shoulders rather than mine. My role is transformed from that of a teacher to that of an educational designer who provides environments that maximize the potential for learning. I then implement this design, as a facilitator, tour guide, and mentor. However, one of my core actions in meeting these responsibilities lies in guiding students, managing their expectations and keeping them facing forwards, while reinforcing this message. The first two weeks of semester one in 2020 commenced in a regular manner with all of these notions in mind.

COVID and the imminent shutdown became real in week 2 of semester 1. Week 2. Consider that for a moment. A first-year student needs time to transition to University life – do they have a clear sense of what 'normal' university life entails at the end of week 2 of their very first semester? Lectures in week 3 were delivered online and my last face-to-face class was during a workshop on Friday of week 3, a class in which the students work on problems in groups and are required to submit a group assessment piece. Undergraduates were to be off-campus from week 4 and my colleague would be taking over lecturing the class, but I had the presence of mind to trial the online Collaborate environment in our learning management system with the students while still in a face-to-face setting. It was a truly authentic and prescient trial. I declared to the students that this was scientific experimentation in the truest sense. I was open and honest with them. This was new for me. This was new for them. We would become familiar with this interface together. Then for the next two weeks I remained engaged as topic coordinator and facilitator because we have laboratory classes in odd-numbered weeks and they were my responsibility, but additionally, I would return to lecturing them again in week 6. I wanted to remain connected and monitor their experiences to remain aware of the 'new normal' for them – the learning environment to which they became familiar and accustomed, so that I might maintain consistency for them.

I used the time well. At home, I set up my office with all of the equipment needed to have a functioning online presence that is geared for teaching, capable of meeting with individuals and large groups of people. This equipment was not supplied by the university. The assumption was that domestic technology would be able to manage the requirements of online teaching. Considering the history of broadband internet roll-out in Australia, this was incorrect. But further, to manage the multimodal recording and narrowcasting necessary for lectures, workshops, and labs, conventional domestic technology for my home office was not able to manage the load.

The system I established at home could manage the teaching and learning requirements of online delivery. The speed at which this set up was required – and the investment from my salary – raises a key question for the casualized, precariat academics that dominate teaching in the contemporary university. How could they subsidize the movement to online learning through a casualized salary?

The Scale of My Input in the Decisions to Implement Online Learning

After a College forum where we were given choices to consider - cancel if not needed, defer until later, or record demonstration videos – academics were consulted on our thoughts of 'How should labs operate if the campus becomes closed to students?' The preferred idea of the leadership was producing videos of the demonstrators performing measurements and then giving students data to analyze. The argument to justify this decision was, 'It works in Biology and Chemistry.' The generalizability of particular interfaces and modes of learning is an attempt to crush post-Fordist, bespoke, customized, and disciplinary-specific requirements, creating homogenization and Fordist learning. This is a confusion of standardization with standards.

My physics academic colleagues realized that such a system would not operate at first, second- or third-year level. We thought it best to defer the labs for now and not enable this mode of learning until COVID restrictions were lifted and ensure the students to complete the labs in an intensive mode. This strategy was also not ideal, due to the benefit of formative feedback between experiments, but this compromise was appropriate as hands-on skill development is integral to experimental physics training. Put more brutally, would you trust your body to surgery by someone who is confident of performing a procedure because she has seen it performed on video? Would you be a passenger in a plane where the pilot has never flown an actual aircraft but only watched a video of someone else flying one? I feel the same way about unleashing students with no experimental skills on the $1.2M electron microscope in my research laboratory. The idea of teaching via videoed demonstrations of experiments would be particularly undesirable in third-year classes, where students learn to become confident with complicated scientific apparatus and experimental thinking. To lose this scaffolding in the first year where literacy begins is profoundly problematic, to say the least.

Further, the academics who have to suddenly teach online had no experience or confidence with producing video and delivering online content. My topic was centered around student experiences and I was protective of the compromise in standards that this would impose. I admit that I may have been sensitive because over the past decade first-year physics has been the test-bed of first-year offerings, often forced to compromise its form and content in the name of innovation. I was satisfied with the decision to give students an incomplete grade until they could do the practical work but was mindful of the students being left to wander alone in the physics wilderness, so I sought to find a way to keep them engaged. I contemplated possibilities over that weekend, from a 'starting from scratch' educational design perspective. I asked, 'what can I do that will build disciplinary literacy in an authentic way within the frame of the new, forced mode of delivery that makes the best use of the digital platform?' My answer: I need to make the students spend time authentically engaged with born-digital material, but 'how can it be used most effectively to provide them with a program that meets the learning objectives while empowering them as learners?' Making them watch videos of someone else performing an experiment, then giving them data to analyze would be deeply disempowering.

A better use of their time would be to start developing computational literacy (a different means of putting theoretical concepts into practice) with Mathematica. Under the University's license, students can obtain an academic version that they can use on their personal device. I then designed an exercise that involved students and demonstrators engaging in a Collaborate online classroom, that would first develop 'familiarity' by demonstrating some examples from year 12-level mathematics that they would be surprised to see. Students could explore and build upon these examples within the online laboratory session to provide meaningful connections, and then apply these newfound skills to a homework exercise that they could complete 'open

book style' to reinforce the key ideas and provide them with some 'ownership' of their new-found literacy. I designed a three-lab programme to scaffold the development of this disciplinary literacy. This alternate design was responsive to circumstance, created 'on the fly', developed and rolled out at the last moment. I sought feedback from all of the students, closely observed issues and challenges to that feedback and feed forward to be responsive, to continually improve the student experience.

Once I had developed my ideas to the point that I felt they were not just viable but a suitable solution, I 'managed up' by noting them to our TL leadership as a way of using the 'laboratory contact time' in a productive way. The following week, my Physics academic colleagues met with the leadership team to determine the approaches that would be used in 2nd and 3rd year level offerings to support student learning during the lockdown. I was teaching a class when this meeting was held in Week 4 and so missed it. However, I continued with my plan: students spending 'contact' time on the valuable and engaging tasks I had designed, developing disciplinary literacy that would be of benefit to them. In week 5 of semester the first Mathematica lab was implemented, with me involved in leading and supporting student learning and demonstrator literacy as necessary, despite this time not being in my workload. Developing lectures in a new, unfamiliar setting is always challenging, but to enact this process while changing laboratories for a rich, born-digital environment in the middle of teaching term, without adequate time to perfect it, presented an entirely new level of stress.

What I was Forced to Do

Two weeks after I started the process of replacing our laboratory experiments with Mathematica exercises, in the middle of week 6 I was informed by the leadership team to defer hands-on skill development in the laboratory. 'Incomplete grades' was suddenly not an option as the intent was to complete all students by the end of the semester. I was told to comply with the strategy and produce videos by recording demonstrators performing the hands-on activities in each lab and giving data to the students to analyze. As much as I vehemently disagree with the learning outcomes achieved via this approach, it was superior to not performing anything in the laboratory at all. My concern was that the Physics 1B laboratory program, which follows on from Physics 1A, possesses more complex tasks and occurs via an alternate mode. It is challenge-based. It relies on familiarity and literacy in the laboratory that is only gained through performing the experiments of Physics 1A, which meant that completing the Mathematica program without including the experimental design and experience of the 'normal' lab program would make the laboratory experience for Physics 1B impossible for students to undertake and successfully complete. I have been in this position before and have taken the same stance and approach that I have always done, which is to make the best of the bad situation and try to provide the best possible experiences and outcomes that I can for the students, while upholding standards. As the Dean of Science that is ultimately my role, and it is one that I take quite seriously. Laboratory experience is intensely interactive and involves hand-eye-brain coordination. It is, by its very nature, an active learning environment. The experiments that are in the Physics 1A laboratory were designed to be particularly interactive and thought-provoking, utilizing multiple learning modes. Each experimental exercise begins with students observing eye-opening demonstrations of the 'theme' to capture their attention and interest; perform a conventional experiment where a systematic investigation with measurements is followed; a Mathematica simulation to demonstrate key dependencies of parameters that can be controlled/experimented in a mixed procedural and exploratory way – students tend to use this to produce 'nominal' or 'theoretical' data to compare with their measurements; then at the end if they complete the task, students get to 'play' with the demonstrations themselves and are encouraged to explain why they behave as they do with their new-found knowledge and understanding. This is considerably difficult to translate to an online setting and watching someone else move through this process does not replicate or address the learning outcomes because one does not authentically own their knowledge when they watch someone else perform the task.

Possible Consequences/Prophecies of Foreboding

The primary consequence of these changes enacted through COVID is that students will not have achieved the goal of a 'normalized' year 12 level understanding of physics upon completion of Physics 1A. Students see online environments as asynchronous so that they can engage when it suits them, whereas face-to-face environments are live and synchronous. Coupled with that, there is a behavioural change with consequences for learning. Everything is recorded for student convenience. My second-year class on optics has several students that have not fronted to a live class all semester. Such a decision is made more ironic, considering that optics is about 'seeing' and being 'seen.' They clearly see no benefit in interacting with the lecturer and these courses in experimental physics are being treating like a reading course. The convenience of accessing the materials when it suits them - when they need to access material to perform an assessable task in a just-in-time fashion - clearly exceeds any impetus for live interaction. In contrast, commencing first-year students are less confident and want to remain inconspicuous at the best of times, but in this new environment, it is easier for them to 'skip classes' with the intention of 'catching-up' later. I always tell first-year students two truths:

- The habits you develop in the first year are carried throughout the whole course and possibly the rest of your life; and
- The road to (knowledge) hell is paved with good intentions.

Expertise is built in a manner very much like that of a pyramid where new concepts build and extend upon existing ones, knowledge gaps weaken and can even paralyze the capacity of the learner to absorb, digest, and understand them. From the perspective of the student, they will experience more angst and anxiety going forwards until these gaps are filled and they will have to do it for themselves without the disciplinary literacy to do it effectively. For final-year students, this will be less of an issue and they are likely to never fill these knowledge gaps unless they need to, being able to get by without – but first-year students will carry this impediment throughout their entire higher education. The angst and anxiety can only lead to an increase in the rate of failure and attrition and lead to reduced degree completion rates.

We must be mindful and alert to the factors that influence each student's attitude towards their learning. We all seem to have caught the COVID-19 disease whether we have actually had it or not and it has left us intellectually traumatized. Ordinarily, the notion that 'Ps get degrees' is a way of rendering the difficult challenge of success a safer prospect for students, but it is an unhealthy position and sets low standards. As students' progress, this is the biggest challenge for them. They need to aim much higher. If they do not alter this viewpoint, their future, professional selves will regret it later. This whole experience has provided students with a convenient excuse for lackluster or underperformance. I have encountered far more 'excuses' this semester from students fearlessly telling me what they are unable to do and all of the reasons why, without guilt, without responsibility. My fear is that it will foster a new cultural attitude of 'PTSD gets degrees' and I shudder at the notion of excuse-driven (un)learning. This latter behavior has been even more prevalent in the postgraduate research students, who have suffered the same intellectual paralysis due to the myriad of 'inconvenient possibilities that might occur due to the pandemic' even though our campus remained open for them and for research.

Coping with the transition to online learning environments without any prior experience or time to plan for effective actions has been challenging, but the transition back again had not been considered either. The assumption has been that it is simply an act of flicking a switch and 'normal' operations would quickly resume. As restrictions started to become lifted, staff were 'forced' back onto campus in weeks 10 and 11 of the semester, the transition back has been challenging as well. The decision has been made to keep all classes online for the remainder of semester, which is a position that I wholeheartedly agree with as 'the game' has already been changed twice for the students in my first-year class. An unintended consequence though is that I have come to discover that my home office is now better equipped than my work office for my

online presence and, in particular, for delivering online classes.

A Conclusion in a Circle (Tara)

> Circuit, short-circuit; there is no circus without a circle.
> Paul Virilio (2012)

Mobility studies, alongside popular memory studies, remain the Andrew Ridgely of academic life. These anti/post-disciplines should have been expansive, propulsive and interventionist, enabling research into the political economy, higher education, and theorizations of teaching and learning. Instead, they remain discarded, marginalized, and a mere footnote to easier, more applicable scholarship. Paul Virilio is similar. He was never as popular as Jean Baudrillard. He was never as weird as Jacques Lacan. He did not kill a close relation, like Louis Althusser. He did not wear leather as effectively as Michel Foucault. Instead, he developed a career close to the flame of the French intellectual crucible, but was always socially distanced. His bunker archaeology prepared us for COVID, over a half a century ahead of the threat. Yet also, Paul Virilio's unusual and complex friendship with Baudrillard provides a model for this article, and indeed a revisioned university. Upon Baudrillard's death in 2007, Virilio spoke at the European Graduate School in La Rochelle in France.

> The big difference between Jean and me is that he worked on simulation and I worked on substitution...I would like to relate a small anecdote about Baudrillard and simulation and substitution. When we found ourselves at the Revue Travers, I had just finished my photographic campaign, which took ten years, on the wall of the Atlantic. Baudrillard hated photography at the time. I went to the Revue Travers because before, in the Revue de L'esprit, they didn't have photos or images. At the Revue Travers, I could publish my photos and I told the revue, "I am coming". When I saw Baudrillard, he said "Tisk, tisk, tisk". And now he is dead and I am still alive...It's been quite a long time now since I have stopped taking photos, but he began taking photos. He even finally became a photographer. This is typical in our movement (Virilio, 2009: 68-70).

With Virilio's death following Baudrillard by a decade, the pendulum-swing between simulation and substitution has only increased in speed. COVID triggered panic learning, panic teaching and the claustropolitan university. Simulations of laboratory classes dueled with substitutions of behaviors, actions, activities, assessment, and rubrics. Simulations of face-to-face classrooms were a cut-price outcome for a lack of professional development. Very quickly, different modes of 'lectures' emerged. The substitution created a cascade of options and alternatives. Born-digital 'lectures' are different from their analog companion. Those differences – summoned in a moment of panic learning in a pandemic – are instructive.

This current article is unusual. Like Baudrillard and Virilio's friendship, rarely do cultural studies, physics, and biological science academics collaborate, speak and write together. Silos, gatekeepers and tightly bounded disciplinary literacies block productive, disturbing conversations about knowledge, teaching, learning and research. Yet in a time of panic learning, odd, unstable and difficult conversations are necessary and powerful. Tight and considered relationships between teaching and research are required, contextualized by higher education studies. This article was written by award-winning teachers, who are also active and engaged researchers. There is profound value in aligning once more – in a time of teaching specialists, education-focused and research-only academics – a return to the discussion of university scholarship, and the tight alignments and dialogues between teaching and research.

What is not needed at this point in university history is a critique of the intellectual. Unfortunately, the Australian humanities disciplines – the aging Cinderella who never had a chance to go to the ball and remains cleaning the fireplace of our universities – are in a death

spiral at the end of the world. Defensive, paranoid and resentful of international colleagues, University presses are closing, humanities journals are ceasing publication, and senior academics at elite institutions are summoning old and tired ideas confirming the irrelevance of intellectuals in difficult times. For example, in the final issue of the Cultural Studies Review in 2019, the editors published a failed referee report that blocked the journal from gaining international funding. They Australian editors attacked this referee for their commentary, rather than seeing the deep truth expressed within it. The referee stated,

> The most recent issue ... exemplifies the strengths and weaknesses of the journal ... I think the journal is the Meaghan Morris Motel ... This is a very Australian journal— very, very local even in its efforts to reach outwards. If I want to know what Australians are thinking about things, I would consult it. But in many ways it feels like a different planet than my own and I don't think I would read it regularly ... This is an Australian journal. I had to sit down and ask myself, as someone who has run a Cultural Studies program, who considers herself to be in the field, what journals do I read regularly? What I don't do is read regularly work in the journals that claim to offer research from cultural studies as a distinct field ... Australia is a big country and there are really smart and interesting people who work there. But the journal has a very Australian profile (anonymous reviewer in Healy and Schlunke, 2019, 3)

There is a lesson to be learned from this review. The lesson is not the anti-Australian nature of US-based publishing. It has never been easier to find an audience for Australian research in the United States. Our article in Fast Capitalism, written by three Australian scholars, confirms this truth. The point is that Meaghan Morris was a minor scholar from a minor nation who published an interesting book at the point that 'French theory' was being translated into English. The Pirate's Fiancée (Morris, 1988) was published over thirty years ago and has not dated well. For minor names and minor publications to be commemorated and celebrated beyond intellectual generosity and legacy content serves to anchor scholarship to a mediocre past. This book remains a metaphor for not only Australian cultural studies, but the Australian humanities more generally. Decades of under or non-existent governmental funding, culture wars, bastardized importation of powerful paradigms like creative industries, and mediocre scholars' gatekeeping and limiting the boundaries of disciplines through funding agencies and the ERA (Excellence in Research Australia) have created a terminal inwardness. When confronted by this truth of insularity and international disconnection in a referee report for the Cultural Studies Review, the editors merely replied,

> The myopic arrogance of such an account is the uniquely parochial preserve of (some) American academics who would no doubt chastise the activists on the streets of Hong Kong and Beirut as indulging in very, very local activity of very, very limited value. The less we have to engage with such people, the better (Healy and Schlunke, 2019, 3).

Sigh. Comparing an Australian cultural studies academic journal to the political activism on the streets of Hong Kong and Beirut demonstrates the accuracy of the referee's judgment. The final sentence confirms the bitchiness, insularity and self-congratulatory nonsense that are now the marinade of the Australian humanities.

It is from this font and context that Ghassan Hage, from the University of Melbourne, wrote of Bourdieu – without a reference – and cited only three scholars in a refereed article on COVID and our universities. Of those three scholars – Ahmed (2019), Hage (2017), and Levy-Bruhl – one was a self-citation. The complex and intricate literature from international higher education studies in the last twenty years remains unused and unreferenced in a discussion of politics, universities, and intellectual life. A refereed article in the European Journal of Cultural Studies was accepted with three references. Further, the very definition of politics is retrograde and problematic in the article:

> And yet, because, in the face of a pandemic, there is something true in the statement that 'now is not the time for politics,' engaging in intellectual and political critique cannot and should not be treated as a facile endeavour. A lack of awareness that one is dwelling amid such a contradictory situation that is at once hyper- and a-political is bound to create that very annoying and useless pontificator we began with. I am assuming that a critical intellectual cares not only about being right but about being listened to. Strategic questions of tone, of timing, of what to say and not to say, and of how much to insist, all become particularly important (2020, 2-3).

Such platitudes, caveats, and codicils seem quaint, a residue of politics of an earlier and better time. From an (online) classroom at the end of the world, with casualized academics dumped like garbage out of a car window and permanent staff rendered voluntarily and involuntarily redundant, with tough regional and rural universities crushed through the short-sighted management of budgets by inexperienced Vice Chancellors who are taking country towns down with them, courage is required. Pondering 'how much to insist' is a phrase and behavior more suited to a regency drama than the tough pandemic politics of panic learning. Not surprisingly, Hage – without references to higher education studies – reverts back to the personal.

> That is why people telling me how my teaching or my writing has positively affected their lives has been and continues to be immensely sustaining. And even though I have had enough experiences of students and readers who have given me positive feedback about my work to feel confident and good about its effect on people, I know that it is not beyond me to dwell in negative chatter. The figure of the useless academic continues to haunt me (2020, 3).

For those of us who do not have the privilege of feeling good about ourselves through 'positive feedback,' 'negative chatter' is the least of our concerns. Beyond the self, what will happen to the higher education workforce? What will happen to these under-prepared first-year students, who then enter second year – under-prepared from their first year – and will then enter an honors and then doctoral program? Are we satisfied that first-year students can 'watch' a lab and gain a substitution for the simulacrum for the analog experience? Yes, the humanities can fixate on an individual academic feeling good about their personal teaching and writing. But the intellectual – without the mitigating adjectives of 'critical' or 'public' – has a singular and first responsibility. We must arch beyond ourselves. Beyond our feelings. Experiences are important. But they are the first step and stage in knowledge.

This article has modeled and summoned, not the "haunting figure of the useless academic" (Hage 2020), but the angry, exhausted, worried, charged, agitated, up-for-a-scrag-fight scholar who welcomes radical critique from radically different disciplines, slam cuts teaching and research, and connects the daily experience of scholarship with the wider positioning of universities in a world that is falling away below our feet. This article has not summoned a critical intellectual or public intellectual. Instead, we activate the sweaty scholar on the move, panicked by under-resourced, under-theorized change, frightened for the future, but staunchly occupying the present. The time for petit-bourgeois chatter has concluded. This is the time for the activist, angry academic, the teacher theorist negotiating the end of the world. The time for hand-wringing about why the humanities are demeaned and marginalized is over. It is time to build the partnerships between the humanities and the sciences, rather than sit in self-absorbed, self-entitled silos. Summon anger. Summon rage. Call out the decline in standards of teaching and learning, rather than fixate on personal discomfort. Activate a brutalizing discussion of the academic workplace and the exploitations activated every day, by supposedly left-leaning 'managers.' An academic is only useless if they choose to be. To summon an echo of Irvine Welsh – we choose difference. We choose disquiet. We choose despair. We choose activism. We choose outwardness. We choose internationalization. We choose heat and passion. We could choose being useless. But why would anyone do that? That is not why people choose the life of an academic.

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Covid-19 Enters College but to What Degree?

Christopher Willard

Degrees of Response

It is becoming clear that the Covid-19 pandemic and consequent lockdown raised mid-semester havoc in higher education. Face-to-face courses were shifted to online delivery, often within a week's notice as faculty and administrators scrambled to save the semester. (See, e.g., Impelli, 2020). Employees were tasked to work remotely while students undertook online learning, some for the first time. Many universities abandoned letter grades and switched to a credit/no credit scheme. Such changes were not without pushback. Students petitioned to have A-F grades back, while other students petitioned for the credit/no credit scheme. According to an article in MarketWatch, as of this writing, at least 100 lawsuits have been filed across the United States by students seeking tuition refunds (Kesher, 2020).

Meanwhile, forward-looking discussions in academia began to revolve around the possibility of some or all Fall semester courses delivered online. The California State University system made the decision to put much of their Fall semester course offerings online; in contrast, Purdue University announced it intends to hold face-to-face classes, at least until the Thanksgiving break. Quickly identified in discussions were equipment and connectivity needs, course delivery needs, and the means to allow quick approval of courses requiring changes in order to run wholly online. Lab and studio-based courses demanded particular consideration, such as a revised course content or limited access to facilities. Discussions also focused on student needs, including those of low-income students and those of students with disabilities. Although many schools scrambled, synchronous and asynchronous forms of online learning are not new. Faculty have often utilized their university's particular learning management platform such as Blackboard, Canvas, Moodle, or D2L. Sites offering online courses like edX, Coursera, and FutureLearn are widely known (there are many more) and in fact MOOCs (Massive open online courses) are booming according to Steve Lohr at The New York Times. (Lorh, 2020). In MOOC models, courses are often free, although learners may purchase a certificate of successful completion.

Cathy O'Neil, who says she has taught online-only for 16 years, suggests in a recent opinion piece that as a result of the pandemic, the value of a traditional, formal, face-to-face education, will be questioned. The author suggests that "online education should come at an online price" and that because of this reevaluation, "college will never be the same" (Oneil, 2020). I tend to agree. When free courses are offered, many of which offer job-relevant, performative skills, it is easy to see why a student whose focus is obtaining a job might question a multi-thousand dollar education offering a credential but which in a bleak job market may be perceived to result in a job the same as they might have gotten without the degree.

However, before digging into these issues, I need to state the empathetic position that I

think we all share. Faculty were and continue to be supportive of governmental and institutional interests in maintaining the well-being of its community members. The abolishment of grades in favor of a credit/no credit scheme for the first semester of 2020 was considered an empathetic response to students whose semester was upended without warning. Many of these students had the additional stress of moving and having to abandon personal items left in dorms or at the university, all while continuing their courses online. It must be acknowledged that many people rose to these unexpected challenges with flexibility, compassion, and support.

On the other hand, the responses to Covid-19 inside ivory tower meeting rooms may be described as a mess. Numerous institutions advanced new emergency measures, often without much-supporting evidence, that often were enacted following non-standard routes of approval. At times, such measures contradicted existing agreements, policies, and procedures. The rationale generally went something like this, "We need to put this into place immediately because of the crisis." Then, in my view, the politicization of the pandemic found on mainstream media in the United States entered into academia with the result of both polarizing and shutting down debate about proposed emergency measures. The phrase "We're all in this together" effectively put any dissenter on notice that to vote against a proposed emergency measure was to announce one's lack of empathy. So much for the sort of viewpoint diversity and parrhesia that is supposedly a hallmark of higher education.

My train of thought in considering the impact of Covid-19 on higher education situates pandemic responses within the currently existing neoliberal saturation of life, government, and market, and that has more and more shoulder-butted education to conform with its agenda. Consequently, I see educational responses to the pandemic acknowledging more of an intensification of existing neoliberal pressures on education than as signaling new pressures from the pandemic alone.

The outline of my discussion takes the following frame: Empathetic responses in a time of crisis should not necessarily entail the infringement of or the abandonment of rights articulated in existing policies, procedures, collective agreements, or contracts. I say this thinking of a cautionary by Alan Brinkley, "Every major crisis in our history has led to abridgments of personal liberty, some of them are inevitable and justified. But in most such crises, governments have also used the seriousness of their mission to seize powers far in excess of what the emergency requires" (Brinkley, 2006). If anything, responses to the Covid-19 pandemic have highlighted a misalignment between management rights as perceived by university administrators and faculty rights, and it is here I wish to direct my focus. Areas of particular vulnerability include academic freedom, faculty workload, and intellectual property.

Crisis responses created and disseminated by university administrators, often with little or no consultation with faculty or faculty unions, potentially have long term ramifications and therefore, such responses **must**, and I don't use that word lightly, be points of overt discussion in academic bodies. Even in cases where there are valid assertions of management rights, I still suggest that a requirement to discuss is necessary, if indeed as said, we are all in this together. Finally, I shift to a considering that academic changes intensified by the pandemic, which include shifts to online learning, mimic a neoliberal movement toward a gig economy. This has, at least, according to Nicole Kobie even before the world knew of Covid-19, a potential for long term educational impact (Kobie, 2018). The short-term solution is to go with existing technologies and forms of delivery. Yet as we move forward, particularly in light of this sudden massive shift to online learning, it will be necessary to engage in discussions about what the most effective form of learning looks like and how that might dovetail with current formal educational learning structures.

Now and Forever?

Reasonable and responsible responses do not mean immediate voting in of emergency

measures that run roughshod over existing agreements, policies, procedures, and contracts. According to behavioral scientist Rachel McCoy who considered the reasons people focused on wearing masks versus other practices, "the actions we take to regain a sense of control tend to be the least effective for controlling the virus" (McCoy, 2020). She cites examples of bulk buying, the wearing of face masks by healthy people, and the improper wearing of face masks. In her view, these actions provide individuals with a better sense of control in a time of uncertainty, more so than does the proven preventative of frequent and careful handwashing. This sense of perceived control with respect to academic decisions around Covid-19 could affect the type of emergency measures that are proposed and enacted. Meetings filled with people who offered bewildered shrugs ended with agreement upon actions, without detailed research and evidence, proving that the action was the most effective response. Combine this with the current social media mindset of cancel culture, in which opposing views are simply canceled, most explicitly evidenced by censorship and banning on social media like Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit, and a foundation is set for quick fixes that are best perceived as controlling the uncertainty.

For example, one might ask whether moving courses online is simply a new method of delivering content. Jonathan Zimmerman points out that studies in the 1990s found little difference in the achievement of students whether they took online, hybrid, or face-to-face courses. However, he also cites a 2014 study by Columbia University researchers who looked at 40,000 students in community and technical colleges in Washington State to compare how the same students did in online courses versus face-to-face courses. The researchers found that all students performed worse in the online courses, affecting particularly hard those with less academic opportunity and skill. In Zimmerman's view, we have a duty to find out the efficacy of online courses. He writes, "So far as I know, no college has committed to using this crisis to determine what our students actually learn when we teach them online" (Zimmerman, 2020). In his opinion, going forward without this information is not simply "a lost opportunity; it's a violation of our most sacred trust." (Zimmerman, 2020). Or, for example, we might ask, what exactly was the research-based rationale to prove that abolishing grades for a credit/no credit scheme was best practice in a crisis? The fact that students started petitions to both have the choice of grades and credit/no credit belies the idea there was consensus or that rational, research-based evidence for the decision was made available to students. The scenario of Fall 2020, in which some institutions are compelling their entire student body to take online courses, is the perfect opportunity to gather evidence and to measure student online learning as compared to face-to-face learning, according to Zimmerman.

Over the first few months of 2020, I became aware of numerous emergency responses to Covid-19 at various North American institutions that were said to contravene normal policies and procedures. In addition, a number of these were initiated without limitations, and therein lies the possibility of any temporary measure to become chronic. An example would be a written change to a policy or procedure, stated in voting meetings as temporary, but which lacks any start and end date. A response by administrators about how they might need to use the emergency measure again in the future, at will, and thus it should not have an end date, should be viewed as unreasonable. In the event of a new crisis, another document can be created with a new set of effective dates. Professor Shannon Dea, Vice-President of the faculty association of the University of Waterloo said, "Universities started by reacting to the emergency. Next, they will settle into a new phase of medium-term measures until we're beyond the crisis. Finally, they will have to adapt to the new normal, whatever that looks like" (Dea, 2020). Faculty agree to quickly enacted emergency measures that require immediate implementation, but they may not have the opportunity, or time, to fully consider the long term impact of each measure. Potentially then, a set of documents is in play that may be cited as setting precedent for future use.

Some of the changes in the universities came down from the government. The view of Michael Murphy is that emergency rules have given powers to the executive beyond common checks and balances and the temptation will be to cling to those powers. He speaks of government, but the same threat may exist with a university's senior administration. The danger,

writes Murphy, is that universities will end up with less autonomy. Many institutions already find this is happening, for example, with government-issued key performance indicators. Some of these apparently strive to turn system-wide programs into trade school models with foci on graduate employment, apprenticeships, job transition, and the commercialization of intellectual property (See, e.g., Anderson, 2020). Combine this with cuts to funding and institutions without substantial endowments are doomed to comply. One example is the internationally known 150 year-old San Francisco Art Institute, which is not accepting any students for the Fall 2020 semester, and has announced plans to close, substantially downsize, or partner with another institution. The institute's President, Gordon Knox said the already declining financial situation had been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic (Wells, 2020). A broader view is taken by Brian Rosenberg, who wonders if colleges generally will be resilient enough to bear the long term financial cost of the lockdown (Rosenberg, 2020).

Freedom In and From Academia

Academic freedom is generally granted to faculty so that they can teach their courses in any manner they wish, normally restrained by approved learner outcomes and university logistics. Resultantly, content, design, pacing, methods, means of delivery, assessment, evaluation, and the assignment of grades are the responsibility of faculty.

The movement to online course content delivery resulted in institutions who did not already have a robust online presence to quickly move current courses online. Some late spring and summer courses were put online. However, in some institutions, the creation of an online course asks that a different set of creation conditions apply, conditions specifying aspects such as recordings, ownership of intellectual property, and so forth. This potentially results in semantic wrangling in which an online course is said to differ from a course in which the delivery method is solely online. To state the obvious, a course is comprised of content and content delivery methods, and both should exist as the purview of the faculty. Arguably the decision by administrators to move courses online technically violates the faculty member's right to the type of content delivery that they deem most effective. Faculty, obviously and for good reasons, agreed to this emergency shift in delivery method. If this issue is pursued and indeed going online with an existing course is simply a method of delivery, and fully within the faculty member's academic freedom, it would suggest that a faculty member could run a course online at will; it is hard to imagine that administrators would agree to this move.

Many administrators quickly stated they would abrogate grades for the semester, citing that the decision was an empathetic response to students whose routine was suddenly filled with change and uncertainty. The result was that administrators decided letter grades would be replaced by a credit/no credit grading scheme, or that students had the option of choosing either a letter grade or a credit/no credit. This decision gave students control over the type of grade they wanted, and often this meant that they could negotiate their grade with an administrator. For example, a student receiving any passing grade, no matter how low, could ask for and receive a grade of "credit" without any consultation on anyone's part with the course instructor of record. At issue is the right of faculty to assess and assign grades. Indeed, they are the only people (perhaps in addition to Teachers' Assistants) who have an awareness of each student's progress toward and fulfillment of stated learner outcomes. Wresting grading from the responsibility of faculty should be seen as an unacceptable encroachment of academic freedom.

Finally, planning for a Fall 2020 semester online, in part or in whole, has caused some institutions to see as beneficial some degree of consistency in either course content or delivery. Institutions may be requesting that sections of the same course be taught the same, with the same design, content, methods, pacing, and so forth. Or faculty may be asked to create video lectures designed to be used by faculty teaching different sections of the same course. Doug Lederman, in an article for Inside Higher Ed, stated that going on line "also calls for greater dependence

on predeveloped instructional materials (freely available open educational resources, pre-existing course libraries such as those developed by massive open online course providers" (Lederman, 2020). MOOCs are one model in that the same content can be accessed by many people over multiple years, but administrators need to be aware that academic freedom in the university also means that content created by a faculty member is for the discrete course they are teaching. It is the property of the faculty member and most often has not been created for distribution at the will of either administrators or other faculty.

The exception will be work-for-hire, in which a faculty member is hired by the institution to create a course for distribution. This, in turn, necessitates a contract that fully articulates all foreseeable conditions of rights, distribution, and payment. It should also be noted that at some institutions, this form of work-for-hire would set up a new category of employment, that in turn, would touch a collective agreement, normally requiring approval by faculty. Lederman, citing Richard Garrett who wrote a report on reimagining the college experience for a possible fall of online delivery wrote, "He also suggests that campus administrators and instructors may need a 'new compact' on a more centralized and systematized approach to course development, rather than leaving the building of courses up to each faculty member's own preferences on structure and format. That may make many faculty members bristle, but 'it is definitely necessary' in a moment like this, Garrett said" (Lederman, 2020). A problematic model in most current academic structures, although it is possible to imagine, would be a university undertaking a work-for-hire contract for a course that as a video allows the course to be "taught" by someone with a title such as course administrator, thus taking the course out of faculty teaching responsibility.

Advocated is the view that faculty have, or should have, a respected voice in determining policies and practices with respect to distance education, that articulate ownership of material they create for courses, face to face, and online. Faculty must be clear that normal development of course material is not work for hire. The faculty teaching online courses should have academic freedom, to use their own material, not to be forced to share their material without agreement and compensation, and not be forced to use material created by someone else. Other more specific guidelines and nuances of the guidelines mentioned here, such as material prepared by a content expert and "unbundled" by faculty facilitators, are found in the document (Euben, 2020).

Again, future crisis practices should not be allowed to disregard current agreements. Changes such as these are potentially incremental attacks on academic freedom and should be perceived as such, no matter the intended benefit.

Finally, but worth remembering in a cancel culture environment is that academic freedom in its best form in academia gives faculty the right to criticize without deference any institutional prescribed doctrine in the search for knowledge and best practice. Academic freedom does not require that faculty must simply accept last-minute decisions handed down from on high during a sudden lockdown, and especially during a future of more online delivery of course content.

When Working Hard Isn't Working Well

A balance of faculty duties typically includes activities specified by a collective agreement that includes teaching, service to the institution, and research/research dissemination. A clause also usually exists that states other duties may be assigned at the pleasure of a named senior administrator. Depending upon the institution, the embedding of course revision and creation may be understood as part of a normal workload, or a course release may be given for the time required to undertake the work of significantly revising or creating a new course. Measures in response to sudden online delivery have likely interrupted normal workloads, in that faculty whose courses have not been created specifically as online courses have been or will be expected to get their courses into an online deliverable form. This, in and of itself, takes hours and days of work. One faculty member complained on a Reddit forum about being "told to prep our fall

courses to be online only, in person only, AND a mix of both" (u/Superfluous, 2020) As the Redditor pointed out, the request is to design three courses with the same content, with equal information, assignments, and so forth. In this manner, workload as a direct result of responses to Covid-19 substantially increases, potentially without recognition or compensation or without a relaxation of other service work.

It should be seen as unreasonable to ask that faculty do uncompensated institutional work off contract or during the time allocated for other duties. Typically, for many faculty, little research can be done during the teaching semester due to the workload. They are entitled to their allocated yearly leave (summer or otherwise), and they must schedule their research into their remaining time. The assigning of extra work to accommodate online delivery can potentially impede upon vacation or research time, as though faculty are required to donate that time to the institution in an exceptional time.

Faculty and their unions should be particularly wary of pressure, real or perceived, to undertake uncompensated labor. The issue of uncompensated labor is magnified with job-precarious hires, part-time faculty, in particular. They are normally off contract over the summer, and they return to contract normally one or two weeks before the first day of classes. Their ability to catch up with online delivery of their courses in such a short time raises concerns. This group could also be vulnerable to informal requests to undertake unpaid labor over the summer, for example, in the sense individuals might believe their rehiring will be contingent upon doing the work. Their hiring to teach an online course might be contingent upon their agreeing to use their own capital resources for equipment and internet connectivity. A related issue of faculty concern is class size. If in response to governmental mandates about social distancing, face-to-face lab classes, for example, could be split into multiple smaller sections with the expectation the faculty member teach all sections while considering the aggregate of the sections to be only one course. On the other hand, going online with a course could see its numbers drastically increased. Clear language in collective agreements about numbers of courses taught, or numbers of students in courses becomes important.

All of this seems to move education closer to a neoliberal, gig economy mentality. The idea, 'Everyone's an entrepreneur!' is word spinning to support a series of actions that rely upon non-institutional capital and unpaid labor for the completion of tasks. These should be subjects of concern and rebuke that go hand in hand with the idea that a university may also function as a coercive institution, with implied pressures often as effective as directives. Again, this is especially true for faculty whose job security is precarious.

Who Owns the Future

The devil is in the details appears in full bloom with intellectual property (IP) that brings up a panoply of specific points requiring discussion and agreement in the academic setting. There are however, a few general arenas that frame the subject.

It is common that the university owns a course description (a brief descriptive paragraph of the course), learner outcomes (normally passed through academic bodies), and an outline of the course that states things like times, credit weight, and other general information. Most universities agree that faculty own their course syllabi, course design, lectures, presentations, specific methods for delivering specific content, and so forth. Copyright laws generally support this too. That said, copyright laws vary depending on the country but it's common to find that any work created and fixed in a tangible form is automatically copyrighted to the creator. Frequently copyright exists without the creator adding a statement of copyright, without self-copyright mailing of documents to oneself, without the need for a © symbol, and without a need to register the work with a copyright office. Checking with national copyright laws is important as some countries do require a copyright symbol. Obviously, applying any of these copyright standards would provide extra precaution. Copyright normally includes anything fixed in a tangible form,

such as audiovisual work, written work, paintings, computer programs, and so forth. As such, the written and online work that faculty create for a course would be covered. I suggest it is important that faculty recognize their course material as work created in a fixed and tangible form, that is the result of our experience, knowledge, and creativity.

Intellectual property rights should be retained by faculty when courses move to online delivery, although nuances related to ownership can vary. Faculty will want to differentiate between work for hire, in which the faculty member is commissioned by the university to create course materials for the university that is not the normal creation of course material. In a work for hire scenario there should be a contract that articulates aspects such as royalties, sharing or transferring, author crediting, licensing agreements, internal or external use allowances, and so forth. It should also be clear that the teaching of a course in the classroom, or the running of such courses on a university hosted platform, should not constitute a common contract phrase about substantial use of university resources in creating the course, thus giving rights to the university. This brings up a related point for consideration, that a document articulating the creation of courses specify that faculty are to be the creators, to prevent external non-faculty entities from creating deliverable course content. It is worth watching for documents and language that contravene a creator's ownership of content created for online delivery, distance learning, and/or MOOCs without a work for hire agreement (AAUP, n.d., Intellectual Property). Another good document is found with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT, 2013).

A second issue to consider concerns the online dissemination of content. Michael Poliakoff draws attention to the fact that there potentially exists "a permanent record of virtually everything" that would be part of an online course (Poliakoff, 2020). We know that information posted online can be saved, copied, and recorded in many forms, often by a linked or external device. In turn, this perpetual existence could stifle free and open dialogue, and it could potentially negatively impact academic freedom and student learning. One deterrent might be to add language about copyright and a prohibition against unauthorized recording into course syllabi, rather than to simply rely on a university document if any, that students may not have access to. The University of California at Santa Cruz has developed some good language that might be seen as a model for this (Lee, 2020). A view that faculty own their IP rights that informs a series of questions are found in an article by Edward Maloney and Joshua Kim (2019) who state broadly, "every college and university would be wise to affirm principles of faculty control of and access to the intellectual property created for teaching." Ideally, this would be language in a collective agreement or policy. From another viewpoint, the university student code of conduct could address unauthorized recording and/or the distribution of lectures. A document that outlines protections for students and faculty in online courses would seem ethically important regarding image ownership and privacy laws. Even a scenario of universal access is balanced by creator rights, the need to incentivize all stakeholders, and framed by regulatory policies, limitations, and exceptions (Vézina and Green, 2020).

A leader in considerations of proprietary rights and protections for faculty has been The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) that advocates for clarity in applicable documents. In their view, "The administration should publish these policies and procedures and distribute them, along with requisite information about copyright law, to all concerned persons. The policies should include provisions for compensating those who create new course materials or who adapt course materials originally prepared for traditional classroom usage, including any use or reuse of recorded material." As well, the document references its Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure endorsed by more than 200 education and professional organizations (AAUP).

Gig-Learning

As mentioned before, I see many of the changes enacted or proposed in higher education as a

result of the pandemic as an intensification of neoliberal ambitions. It is a multi-pronged pressure as governmentally mandated key performance indicators linking funding to enrollment numbers, retention, graduation rates, and nearly immediate job placement, that together reflect a shift toward a technocratic society. Jason Read describes this movement clearly, "The contemporary trend away from long term labor contracts, towards temporary and part-time labor, is not only an effective economic strategy, freeing corporations from contracts and the expensive commitments of health care and other benefits, but it is also an effective strategy of subjectification as well. It encourages workers to see themselves not as "workers" in a political sense, who have something to gain through solidarity and collective organization, but as 'companies of one.' They become individuals for whom every action, from taking courses on a new computer software application to having their teeth whitened, can be considered an investment in human capital" (Read, 2009). Undoubtedly, there are benefits to a model in which learners have more agency in creating individualized learning pathways. On the other hand, it is worrying that education has the potential to promote education as simply job skill preparation and that meaning in education is narrowed to consuming and exchange. The result is a knowledge economy centered on educating labor for service industries and their managers. In the view of Ilkka Kauppinen, knowledge capitalism means more and more that the outcomes of post-secondary formal learning institutions are at the behest of capitalist desires (Kauppinen, 2013). In the capitalist model of education, there is a reproduction of the social relations found with a gig economy. These are often promoted as stressing flexible work time and task management, a work/life balance, and greater independence, when alongside is the fact that gig workers discover job precariousness, a lack of benefits, lower salaries, and longer working hours (Duszynski, 2020).

An ad for an online dance lesson company writes, "Learn to dance for only $8.25 a month. …access anywhere…Start leveling up now and don't be left behind" (Steezy, 2020). Perhaps this indicates one future of education beyond brick and mortar buildings. No longer are there courses but levels, with zero face-to-face contact hours. Learning becomes fractured in which micro-learners attain micro-credentials in micro-steps. Air Ph.D. anyone?

This sort of "gig learning" confronts traditional learning models in the sense that the on-demand consuming of video lectures (granted online learning is more than this) mimics features of gig economy social behaviors and mindsets. Outcomes arguably might include the general passivity of the learner, the idea that knowledge is easily accessed and easily consumed, the one-way direction of learning, the blurring of learner and consumer, the lack of discourse and challenge, a diminishment of the individualized learning path, a dismissal of inquiry-based learning, an enhancement of a power differential, and a reinforcement of a producer/consumer relationship. All of this works to potentially stifle academic freedom, not with a direct attack on knowledge but through its form positioning knowledge as a step by step acquisition of performative and instrumentalist skills as opposed to knowledge and expertise rich instructors who ask for a sustained investigation, or a questioning attitude.

Peter Janzow uses the cute little euphemism "soloists" to describe gig workers. "A decade from now, when solo workers comprise the majority of the American workforce, I think it will be common for all of us to point to digital credentials and badges as a better way to talk about our own expertise and the know-how of others. Trusted digital credentials will strengthen the new economy by removing some of the high-frequency friction and inefficiencies of project work. Digital, verifiable credentials owned by each worker will ease employer uncertainty while forming project teams. And at the same time, badges will help each of us to identify relevant new work projects and navigate toward just-in-time learning opportunities" (Janzow, 2015). Here is found a manifestation of the capitalist predation. One might seriously question that the general goal of education in society is to reduce friction between thinkers, workers, and the businesses that need work done.

Brancaleone and O'Brien speak to the "the appearance of learning outcomes (via its messages of 'transparency', 'visibility', 'assess-ability') remains key to its concrete (economic) value for education. The media remains largely complicit in this education spectacle through an

unproblematic acceptance of the learning outcome" (Brancaleone and O'Brien, 2011, p. 510). To be clear, the learning outcomes the authors speak of are not simply those arising from the pursuit of knowledge; instead, they align with external agendas in which education is putatively only of short term instrumental value. Performance indicators stress seamless transitions into jobs related to majors without recognizing the lack of jobs in more than a few domains. The humanities is one of the better examples. There are few if any jobs that allow one to do the work they did in their major. There are few if any jobs that allow a philosophy major to further a metaphysical argument, a visual artist to create a neo-conceptual sculpture, a literary major to write a contemporary novel, or a composer to write their own symphony. Instead, these humanities majors obtain service jobs, working as a guard in a museum, doing gig design, serving coffee at Starbucks and so on, jobs unrelated to their education. Clearly, the government's need to instrumentalist education at the expense of certain domains has been ongoing. Brancaleone and O'Brien continue, "The dynamic of the Bologna Process reveals the unquestioned adoption of the market model of education and mirrors the railroading of the neoliberal agenda and inscription into economic policy across the European Union since the 1990s….What remains particularly worrying is that market policy has extended its sphere of influence, in direct and indirect ways, to all other areas of society, including education" (Brancaleone and O'Brien, 2011, p. 515-516). It is as though each learner is, upon receiving a credential, required to immediately shift to being a social laborer, operating within an exchange economy, acting as though the aphoristic "knowledge for the sake of knowledge" is simply history.

Arguably, as a result of this process, we lose learners who have a wide range of ways and means of responding to the world, we lose viewpoint diversity, and we lose critical and analytical thinking. Also lost are reflection, empathy, negotiation, and new meaning creation that result in more sophisticated knowledge.

Gig-learning supports students as they learn to rely upon the technocratic architecture of corporate structures and on-demand, task-specific assignments. Governments don't seem to care about what's lost in holding educational institutions to key performance indicators in their perpetual seeking of an answer to the short term question, "Where's the value-added or payoff?" It is a sad irony that in promoting a gig economy that it is the gig workers (temporary faculty) who are first to be let go when financial cuts come to education.

As I've argued, responses to the pandemic generally seem reflective of neoliberal goals that strive to commodify and marketize nearly every aspect of life, that privileges competition and individual rationality. As this mindset continues to enter into academia, core educational values are at stake. According to Daniel Saunders and Blanco Ramírez (2016), "If critical scholars focus on particular manifestations of excellence as problematic without challenging excellence as normative neoliberal technology, they risk delving into a technical argument about the 'proper' measurement and assessment of excellence. Such an argument works to strengthen and legitimize the normative power of excellence and its undergirding neoliberal ideology." Excellence is a vague term and one that, if used without reference, can be applied to virtually any mandated structure that is backed up by metrics designed to support a cost/benefit rationale.

Beyond this Pandemic

The pandemic has forefront a range of issues particular to and which have the potential to touch upon academic freedom, intellectual property, workload, and a furthering of neoliberal agendas. That said, I do not mean to present the issues as one-sided. There is a great deal of potential and value in global open-source learning, open access publishing, and so forth, to shift traditional models of knowledge acquisition and dissemination that would be of great benefit to many. My goal is to suggest wariness in the face of pandemic changes spun as emergency measures, sold as temporary, which are silently turned more permanent. To a degree, the symbolic order of education was collapsed by the pandemic, lockdowns, and movement to online course

delivery. I think it is fair to say that we won't simply return to the old order, nor will we suddenly create a new model, rather our future will be built upon a foundation of adaptations to the crisis responses.

The exceptional can quickly become normative. The issues outlined above potentially can, inch by inch, pave the way for both administrative control and loss of faculty rights. Of course, faculty wish to be empathetic, and we want to assist in helping our community, but we shouldn't be seduced or cowed into relinquishing often hard-won rights. I always imagine when a precedent is initiated the phrase a year or two later being stated in a meeting, "When it was first implemented, you didn't object."

Not only do conversations around the issues become important, but it is also often necessary to make explicit that a duty to consult involves substantive discourse (Consultation Principles, 2018). With respect to existing policies or collective agreements, there is benefit in the drafting of a letter of understanding that speaks to both the changes and the time period that such changes would be active.

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Was Karl Marx an Ecosocialist?

Carl Boggs

Facing the provocative question as to whether Karl Marx could be regarded as an ecosocialist – the very first ecosocialist – contemporary environmentalists might be excused for feeling puzzled. After all, the theory (a historic merger of socialism and ecology) did not enter Western political discourse until the late 1970s and early 1980s, when leading figures of the European Greens (Rudolf Bahro, Rainer Trampert, Thomas Ebermann) were laying the foundations of a "red-green" politics. That would be roughly one century after Marx completed his final work. Later ecological thinkers would further refine (and redefine) the outlook, among them Barry Commoner, James O'Connor, Murray Bookchin, Andre Gorz, and Joel Kovel. It would not be until the late 1990s and into the new century, however, that leftists around the journal Monthly Review (notably Paul Burkett, John Bellamy Foster, Fred Magdoff) would begin to formulate the living image of an "ecological Marx." The most recent, perhaps most ambitious, of these projects is Kohei Saito's Karl Marx's Ecosocialism, an effort to reconstruct Marx's thought from the vantage point of the current ecological crisis.

Was the great Marx, who died in 1883, indeed something of an ecological radical – a theorist for whom, as Saito argues, natural relations were fundamental to understanding capitalist development? Saito's aim was to arrive at a new reading of Marx's writings based on previously unpublished "scientific notebooks" written toward the end of Marx's life. From this and related materials, Saito concludes that familiar views of Marx's productivism and Promethean attitude toward nature are misplaced. These myths should give way to a more enlightened view of Marx derived from a broader appreciation of his work. It follows, moreover, that classical Marxism as a whole deserves extensive re-reading, consistent with an ecological turn beginning in the late 1860s.

Could Saito's rather careful exploration of Marx's writings represent a major step toward retrieving the long-obscured contributions of an ecological theorist -- an ecosocialist? Equally worth asking, did the theoretical paradigm fashioned by Marx and collaborator Friedrich Engels manage to advance the kind of scientific materialism (said to be congruent with an ecological outlook) that would later be associated with the Monthly Review authors? The present essay sets out to critically address these and related questions.

If Marx and Engels were indeed the first ecosocialists of record, that achievement – whatever its scientific imprimatur – would have been miraculous given the generally limited interest in matters environmental during the nineteenth century. Such intellectual pursuits would have encountered serious barriers, not least being a Zeitgeist of almost religious faith in Enlightenment values of maximum economic and technological growth, especially in the European context. They would need to have been extraordinarily prescient. Ecosocialism, even today, is among the more peripheral tendencies, addressing deep origins of the modern crisis while avoiding earlier (productivist, statist) traditions aligned with Communism and social democracy. As Michael Lowy writes, such politics "aims not only to transform the relations of production, the productive apparatus, and the dominant consumption patterns but to create a new way of life, breaking with

the foundations of the modern Western capitalist/industrial civilization."[1] Lowy himself was rather skeptical that the Marxist classics were adequate to this task.

Failure to reverse the crisis will, in Lowy's view, leave the planet open to imminent descent into catastrophe. "In sum", he argues, "the capitalist world system is historically bankrupt. It has become an empire unable to adapt, whose very gigantism exposes its underlying weakness. It is, in the language of ecology, profoundly unsustainable and must be changed fundamentally, nay replaced, if there is to be a future worth living."[2] This same point was more recently, and more vigorously, set forth by David Wallace-Wells, in The Uninhabitable Earth, where he suggests that managers of the industrial world are presently on a "kamikaze mission" of endless material growth.[3]

Obsessive growth ensures not only a worsening crisis but, in all probability, irreversible planetary collapse. Wallace-Wells, among more recent critics, has sounded the alarm: "In that world . . . the oceans would eventually swell two hundred feet higher, flooding what are now two-thirds of the world's major cities; hardly any land on the planet would be capable of efficiently producing any of the food we now eat . . . probably about a third of the planet would be made unlivable by direct heat; and what are today literally unprecedented and unlivable droughts and heat waves would be the quotidian condition of whatever human life was able to endure."[4] Writing in Fossil Capital, Andreas Malm comments: "The point of too late is coming closer by the day . . . The tradition of the dead is breathing down the necks of the living, leaving them with two choices: smash their way out of business-as-usual . . . or succumb to an accumulated, unbearable destiny."[5] A pressing issue we confront here is whether nineteenth-century Marxism, however theoretically refurbished, can be enlisted for purposes of overcoming the crisis.

In Search of an Ecological Marx

Saito's book has been widely heralded as something of a theoretical breakthrough in the study of Marxist classics, having won the esteemed Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize in 2017. Kevin Anderson describes Karl Marx's Ecosocialism (on the back cover) as "a new interpretation of Marx, one that is timely given the economic and ecological crises of contemporary capitalism." For his grand efforts, Saito relies heavily not only on Marx's early writings but on previously unpublished materials, including many entries of his "scientific notebooks" where, nearing the 1870s, Marx fixed increasing attention on the natural sciences.

After the meticulous study of these materials, Saito concludes that ecology must now be seen as not merely important but **central** to Marx's theoretical interests as he navigated beyond the more important writings spanning the 1840s to 1860s. This interpretation clashes with the prevailing view of Marx based on the Communist Manifesto and other sources, where he assumed "unlimited economic and technological developments as a natural law of history and propagated the absolute mastery of nature, both of which run counter to any serious theoretical and practical consideration of ecological issues such as the scarcity of natural resources and the overloading of ecospheres."[6] The well-known emphasis in Marx and Engels on human domination of the natural world – a common motif of the period – is now said to require rethinking that more fully takes into account Marx's later writings. Critics have been mistaken in the belief that Marx and Engels ignored the environmentally destructive force of modern industry, a system that was beginning to move toward limitless material production and mass consumption. Lowy is one modern ecosocialist who argues that Marx did not adequately consider how capitalism would become so ceaselessly destructive of the natural habitat.[7]

Saito writes that since Marx's most important work, Capital, remained incomplete, the later notebook materials must be assigned special value. Roughly half of these entries dealt with several natural sciences – biology, chemistry, botany, geology – yet "the importance of this work remained neglected for more than a century."[8] Appreciation of these materials, along with such familiar earlier works as the 1844 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, now "allows

scholars to see Marx's ecology as a fundamental part of his critique of political economy."[9] In other words, we have now reached a point where ecological problems must be understood as integral to the classical Marxist enterprise.

Saito's undertaking aims for no less than a systematic reconstruction of Marx's critique of capitalism focused on a rupturing of the organic bond between humans and nature, between society and the natural environment. Thus: ". . . Marx consistently bestowed a central role in his critique of modern society to the problem of separation of humans from the earth"[10] – a problem already identified in the 1844 Manuscripts. During the 1870s, in particular, Marx came to see that "metabolic rifts [between society and nature] were the most serious problem of capitalism."[11] The notion of "metabolic rift" had been previously explored by such writers as Foster, but here Saito renders it a centerpiece of Marxian analysis. Alongside the degradation of labor, capitalism gave rise to a "historical deformation" of nature – the two processes convergent, part of the same dialectic.

As capitalism disturbs the "natural metabolism," according to Saito, "the capitalist tendency to degrade nature is derived from the law of commodity exchange" – though the precise ways that "law" winds up impacting the natural habitat is never fully explained.[12] Saito argues that Marx never abandoned his 1844 affirmation of the "absolute unity of humans and nature", which he proceeded to refine in his later work (including the notebooks), where he investigated such topics as soil depletion and climate change. While capitalism destroyed that (imputed) organic unity, it would presumably be the historic task of socialism to restore a dynamic, sustainable metabolic process. Human mastery of nature would come to an end, ultimately replaced by the integration of the two realms. To fully comprehend this phenomenon, the theory would require a more rigorous materialist foundation: "An analysis of Marx's project needs to go beyond the earlier interpretation and include the analysis of the material world as a central object of the study."[13]

For Saito, as for Marx, labor within the capitalist economy is a purposeful, conscious activity where humans mediate, regulate, and control (or seek to control) the metabolism between their own self-activity and the rhythms of nature – though here again the constituent elements of nature (addressed later) are never clearly elaborated. Where nature is fetishized, as is so often the case with Marx, it is also left rather amorphous, undifferentiated. Under capitalism, the developmental process is intercepted by an enduring "rift" associated with multifaceted environmental challenges. In Saito's reading, Marx was well ahead of his time, anticipating ecological crises that would eventually accompany the more familiar economic contradictions. If true, this would suggest an overturning of Marx's supposed Prometheanism, according to which sustained industrial and technological expansion would continue into the new socialist order. Saito writes: "Only a systematic analysis of Marx's theory of metabolism as an integral part of his critique of political economy can convincingly demonstrate, against the critics of his ecology, how the capitalist mode of production brings about various types of ecological problems due to its insatiable desire for capital accumulation."[14]

Beyond calling attention to the likelihood that Marx brought a discourse of environmental ethics into his work, Saito argues for its **centrality**: "In spite of its unfinished state, Marx's political economy allows us to understand the ecological crisis as a contradiction of capitalism."[15] Just how Marx and Engels – or any other theorists of the period – might have defined "ecological crisis" remains unclear. Saito insists that the problem of ecology was never of secondary or peripheral interest to Marx, that in fact, "metabolic rifts were the most serious problem of capitalism."[16] Beyond that, modern theoretical approaches to ecology owe a great debt to Marx's deep insights into commodity production, labor, and the endemic conflict between humans and nature.

If Marx's philosophy in his earliest writings transcended the antinomies of traditional materialism and German idealism – reaching a dialectical synthesis of the two – in Saito's view, Marx turned increasingly toward scientific materialism from the late 1860s onward, consistent with his sharpening fixation on ecology. His notebooks during those years reveal keen attention to

several natural-science disciplines, as noted. The very idea of "metabolic rift" affirms a profoundly scientific, if not ecological, preoccupation. Here we see glimpses of Marx's interest in further exploring the tensions between capital and nature, between the economy and its surrounding landscape. After 1868, according to Saito, "Marx [in contrast to his earlier writings] came to clearly recognize natural limits as such, parting from a myth of unlimited technologically-driven increase in production."[17] Hardly Promethean, the Marx of Saito's reconstruction nearly comes across as a contemporary deep ecologist wedded to "limits of growth."

Despite his thorough probing of Marx's work, Saito is hardly the first interpreter of an "ecological Marx," or even the first to call attention to the idea of "metabolic rift." That distinction would be claimed by Foster, who, in Marx's Ecology (2000), set forth arguments prefiguring those of Saito and approximating those of colleague Burkett in Marx and Nature (1999).[18] Later volumes – for example, Creating an Ecological Society (2017) by Magdoff and Chris Williams – have further sought to "ecologize" the Marxist tradition.[19] Saito's departure from earlier treatments thus appears considerably less radical than the boosters have wanted us to believe. Saito's main contribution here lies in the emphasis he places on Marx's post-1868 work. All conclude that the long-accepted Marxist domination-of-nature motif has been finally and thoroughly debunked.

As for the concept of "metabolic rift," that already figured centrally in Foster's account, as did the emphasis on rigorous scientific materialism seen as indispensable to ecological thought. Foster likewise calls attention to a post-1860s shift toward Marx's heightened understanding of how capitalism degrades nature. In Foster's words: "In their later writings, significantly, Marx and Engels were to make the consideration of such ecological contradictions a central part of their critique of modern civilization (and particularly capitalist society)."[20] Renewed attention to the natural sciences was said to further solidify this far-reaching theoretical shift.

Foster stresses Marx's preoccupation with the "necessary unity of human and natural existence" that had appeared in the 1844 Manuscripts.[21] The same capitalist mechanisms that gave rise to alienated labor simultaneously produced the alienation of humans from nature. All of this, in Foster's view, could be analyzed through the lens of dialectical materialism or scientific naturalism, which was thought to have broadened the panorama of natural relations. Foster goes to great lengths to distinguish Marx's dialectical approach from earlier forms of crude, one-dimensional materialism – though, as we shall see, with at best only partial success. The crucial point here is that an "ecological Marx" would presumably have to rest on firm scientific mooring. That claim would be validated, in Foster as in Saito, with reference to the elevated focus of both Marx and Engels on natural sciences in their later years.

The seductive idea of an "ecological Marx" has been articulated, in rather different ways, across the literature explored here. There remains the question of just how central an ecological outlook might have been to the overall work of Marx and Engels. Were identifiable ecological contradictions basic to the process of capital accumulation – or could they have been more incidental? Despite several volumes of work on this topic, much of it centered around the journal Monthly Review, there is little certainty and indeed much disagreement. Foster, for example, adopts a rather extreme position: "I finally came to the conclusion that Marx's worldview was deeply and indeed systematically ecological . . . and that this ecological perspective derived from his materialism."[22] Along similar lines, Saito contends that Marxist theory today cannot be grasped in the absence of its ecological dimension, that it was fundamental to his critique of capitalism.[23] Further: "In spite of its unfinished state, Marx's political economy allows us to understand the ecological crisis as a contradiction of capitalism."[24]

Elsewhere in Saito, however, we encounter something of a minimalist view: "We see 'hints' in his unpublished writings that indicate his intention to explicate various tensions between capital and nature."[25] Hints? Intention? Tensions? Such language scarcely calls forth a powerful ecological dynamic in Marx, earlier or later. In fact, this very discursive minimalism offers clues to theoretical problems ahead.Equally pressing questions arise as we scrutinize the general work of Marx and Engels. Marx's well-known emphasis on human-nature unity in the 1844

Manuscripts turns out to be countered by strongly productivist passages in such works as the Manifesto, Grundrisse, and Capital – revealing passages that should not be downplayed. Insofar as Marx and Engels are considered to have become more deeply ecological throughout the 1870s, their later writings (aside from the unpublished notebooks) could turn out to be even more revealing.

Capitalism and the Natural World

What possible meaning can we derive from the emergence of an "ecological Marx" that might be relevant to the twentieth century and beyond? Did the larger thrust of classical Marxist writings actually furnish the sort of ecological outlook so tenaciously championed by Foster and Saito? Did the later, presumably more mature, contributions of Marx and Engels – writings with a decidedly natural-science preoccupation – alter the balance, finally driving the theory away from its earlier Promethean impulses? With all the attention some classical Marxist texts are said to have devoted to philosophical materialism, do we encounter signs in the later work of serious ecological analysis?

At the outset, Marx's own early attention to human-nature relations in the 1844 Manuscripts – a point of emphasis in Saito – while salient, scarcely rises above the level of abstract generalities. One finds relatively little substance on either side of this equation, less specificity yet when addressing the historical dimensions. Many passages reflect little more than truisms, starting with the premise that humans are part of the natural world, which they self-consciously transform by means of their labor. Thus in the Manuscripts Marx famously writes: "Man **lives** on nature – means that nature is his body, with which he must remain in continuous intercourse if he is not to die, that man's physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself, for man is part of nature."[26] (All masculine references are re tained throughout, consistent with Marx's own usage.) However, profound Marx's statements here might appear, they are framed at such levels of generality as to be emptied of historical or political meaning; they could align with the most harshly instrumental approaches to nature. Marx goes on to say that "Conscious life-activity directly distinguishes man from animal life-activity",[27] another truism that, in this case, ultimately feeds into Promethean assumptions. Throughout these pages, and later, Marx places overwhelming emphasis on **human** self-activity in the historical process of struggling against external barriers, that is, overcoming both personal and collective estrangement.

At many points throughout his most theoretically insightful texts, Marx stressed the liberating potential of productive forces – first within capitalism, then given fuller and more rational expression with the historical achievement of socialism. Questions regarding harm from economic and technological (also urban) colonization of the natural world would be rare. One finds little insight into how sustained material development might surpass natural limits or degrade the natural landscape. On the contrary, his prevailing attitude seemed consistent with that of an enlarged (presumably more enlightened) mastery of nature. In one familiar passage from the Manifesto, after praising the bourgeoisie for creating "colossal production forces," Marx and Engels write: "Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground – what earlier century had even a presentment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labor?"[28] Elsewhere in the Manifesto, they enthuse over how the proletariat, once having conquered power, will wrest "all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State . . . and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible."[29]

This more or less unfettered productivism found its parallels in both The Grundrisse and the first volume of Capital, not to mention later works (a point taken up later). In The Grundrisse,

Marx writes: "Nature builds no machines, no locomotives, railways, electric telegraphs, self-acting mules, etc. These are products of human industry; natural material transformed into organs of the human will over nature, or of human participation in nature. They are **organs of the human brain, created by the human hand**; the power of knowledge, objectified."[30] Such passages are repeated throughout the work of both Marx and Engels, virtually from beginning to end, reflecting an identifiable intellectual persuasion. Another example, from Capital (volume one): "Animals and plants, which we are accustomed to considering as products of, say last year's labor, but the result of a gradual transformation, continued through many generations, **under man's superintendence, and by means of his labor.**"[31] Where might one locate a clearer statement of the Promethean vision?

In Capital (volume three), a work of detailed economic analysis, Marx writes: "Freedom . . . can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, **bringing it under their common control** instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature, and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human nature."[32] Here, as elsewhere, the "blind forces" of nature are to be tamed and mastered by rational forces of modern production, reinforced by the great achievements of modern science and technology. This same motif is carried forward in Critique of the Gotha Program, at presumably the height of Marx's ecological turn (in 1875). He writes: "And insofar as man from the beginning behaves toward nature, the primary source of all instruments and subjects of labor, as an owner, treats her as belonging to him, his labor becomes the source of use values, therefore also of wealth."[33]

Even more problematic for champions of an "ecological Marx" is a number of generalizations in the publication of Engels' Anti-Duhring, which appeared toward the end of Marx's ostensible ecological turn. This work of a rigid materialist epistemology, first published in 1878, was read and approved by Marx, who also wrote an introduction to the section titled "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific." Engels had arranged three general chapters of Anti-Duhring as a pamphlet on the origins of Marxism, outlining its general approach to history. Originally published in French in 1880 (just three years before Marx's death), this section appeared in many languages and became – along with the Manifesto – surely the most influential presentation of Marxist theory for the late nineteenth century and beyond. An English translation appeared in 1892.

As with the Manifesto, this text celebrates the stupendous growth and concentration of capitalist economic power, with its unprecedented dominion over society and nature – the trajectory of a new society. The great "expansive force of modern industry" was expected to open up wonderful new vistas of revolutionary change.[34] Overcoming the forces of anarchy, dispersion, and resistance, this behemoth was a source of "an unbroken, constantly accelerated development of productive forces and therefore for a **practically unlimited** increase in production itself."[35] Humans now "for the first time, become the **real, conscious** lord of nature, because [they] have now become master of [their] own social organization."[36] For an essentially sanctified work of classical Marxism first circulating in the 1890s, it would be difficult to find a bolder affirmation of the human mission to control and exploit nature. With European intellectual attraction to Marxist ideas seemingly at its peak, could readers have been troubled by any confusion between early "philosophical" Marxism and later "scientific" Marxism?

Engels continues forcefully along these lines: "By this act – seizing power – the proletariat forces the means of production from the character of capital . . . and gives their socialized character complete **freedom to work itself out**."[37] And: "Man, at last the master of his own form of organization, become at the same time **the lord over nature, his own master – free.**"[38] Here all ambiguity has been stripped from one of the most important classical Marxist texts. In the end, for both Marx and Engels such human capacity to simultaneously remake society and the natural world would be **magnified** by the historic spread of "scientific socialism" – and would be clearly understood as such by inheritors of the orthodoxy, starting with Karl Kautsky, Georgi Plekhanov, and a circle of "legal Marxists" in Russia.

Beyond Marx, Engels had sought to build a general (materialist) philosophy on a foundation

of natural sciences – a task he further pursued in Dialectics of Nature, which in fact departed little from the more systematic work of Anti-Duhring. One problem is that Dialectics was both rudimentary and fragmentary, whatever the author's grand ambitions for it – a volume never completed and indeed never published until 1925. (Engels worked on the manuscript sporadically between 1872 and 1882, at a time of Marx's own stepped-up interest in the physical sciences.) In this work, Engels construed science as a dialectical process of interconnections leading to qualitative change, though precisely in what ways **historical** change would replicate or be driven by the **physical** change was suggested but never elaborated. This was surely the most "scientific" or "materialist" of classical Marxist writings. The point is not to judge this work in terms of its epistemology or even its political relevance, but rather to emphasize its congruence with the Promethean impulse. Hardly surprising, there is nothing in this widely-read text to contradict above-cited passages from Anti-Duhring or other earlier Marxist sources.

Marx's own attention to the natural sciences toward the end of his life, along with what nowadays might be labeled "ecological" discourses, is not in doubt – yet neither is his agreement with those passages from Anti-Duhring cited above. Returning to Saito, the claims turn out to be substantially more, that indeed Marx had become a systematic ecological thinker, far ahead of his time and not to be confused with the rather commonplace Prometheanism, or Enlightenment rationality, of his time. Saito argues that "Marx developed his ecological thought as a critique of capitalism," adding: "A more complete investigation of new material published by MEGA showed that a stereotypical (and false) critique of his indifference to the scarcity of natural resources and the burdening of our ecospheres, and another critique of his Promethean superstition on limitless economic and technological development, are not tenable."[39]

Saito also points out that "Marx consistently bestowed a central role in his critique of modern society to the problem of the 'separation' of humans from the earth."[40] More precisely: "In contrast to a widespread critique that Marx is a blind supporter of absolute domination over nature, his vision of the future society demands a careful and sustainable interaction with nature, based on a distinct recognition of its limits."[41] In contrast to the destructive logic of capitalism, a more rational (socialist) form of material production would be congruent with an ecologically-sustainable mode of development.

Reading Saito – in alignment with both Marx and Engels – it is difficult to avoid some inescapable problems. First, while references to unified human-nature relations appear valid enough, they remain frustratingly abstract, even tautological. Much the same can be said regarding the "metabolic rift" between society and nature -- a conflict simply rooted in the logic of advancing industrialization in any setting. Such generalizations lack both historical and ecological concreteness, suggesting little that might inspire critical analysis. The interaction between humans and nature, mediated by labor, was for Marx important to his overall theory but was never given the specificity that shaped his deeper treatment of political economy. If we learn that humans, through continuous life-activity, transform the natural world, such truth is hardly enlightening.

More troublesome yet is how the very concept "nature" is framed in the writings of Marx and Engels. It is simultaneously vague, weakly-defined, and incomplete – a criticism more fully discussed in the next section. However, often the reference is invoked across many pages of work, the concept ultimately reveals little and, in fact, obscures a great deal. Moreover, the passages (cited above) that affirm in clearest terms human mastery of nature, while illuminating, actually embrace a standard ideological trope of the period, consistent with an uncompromising faith in supreme industrial and technological growth. In this context, even the most extreme worship of nature – much like the idealization of "human nature" – winds up signifying little.

Third, numerous passages cited in Engels' Anti-Duhring (again, fully endorsed by Marx) run directly and systematically counter to Saito's reading of the later Marx – even accepting the validity of Marx's "ecological turn" after 1868. We can observe here, with abundant clarity, how Marx and Engels shared an ethos of productivism right to the very end of their prolific careers. Given the stage of European capitalist development in the 1870s and 1880s, not to mention the

well-known positivist ascendancy of the period, this reckoning is not very shocking. Saito's claim that Marx's Promethean impulse has been resolutely debunked is not very convincing when measured against these and kindred passages. It is worth noting, moreover, that the motif of limited growth (assuming finite resources) is never seriously taken up in the vast contributions of Marx and Engels, nor indeed in the work of their immediate successors (Kautsky, Plekhanov, and V. I. Lenin among them).[42]

At the same time, Marx's laudable interest in the natural sciences toward the end of his life does not **in itself** reflect an ecological sensibility – any more than we can automatically derive such views from the work of contemporary physicists or chemists, many of whom do military research. Obviously, Marx's own ability to make contributions in these fields had to be severely limited, whatever his degree of interest. Further, attempts to extrapolate theoretical methods or political substance from the study of natural sciences for purposes of historical analysis were, then as now, not likely to be promising. The knowledge accumulated in those fields of study, moreover, has never been innately progressive, much less ecological.

More crucially, as we begin to examine the modern fortresses of wealth and power, the very actuality of human mastery of nature is virtually impossible to avoid once we take into account the vast array of forces warring against every part of the planetary ecosystem. There is no avoiding the fact that advanced industrialism spells not merely control of nature but an **all-out assault** on non-human life and its support systems. In fact, under **any form** of industrialization and urbanization, the very idea of an organic reunification of human-nature relations must be viewed as sheer delusion. The issue rather is precisely **what form and what scope** that domination will assume. It might be asked whether Marx and Engels ever arrived at a coherent ecological analysis of modernizing capitalism – that is, anything beyond their seminal work on (early) capitalist political economy? As Saito writes, there are surely hints here and there of Marx's interest in environmental concerns, but, as noted, these never reached levels of systematic conceptualization. Why was so little of Marx's "scientific" work after 1868 published at the time? Why did so many heirs of classical Marxism adopt even more extreme forms of scientific materialism and systemic productivism than were present in Marx's own work?

In the end, Marx turned out to be rather consistent in his belief that humans had the need (and capacity) to define, shape, and exploit the natural world. Engels pushed this motif even further. To have believed otherwise, in view of their larger theoretical enterprise, would have to seem far-fetched. Marx and Engels repeatedly insisted that the natural environment is subject to rational human intervention within a dynamic process of historical transformation, control of productive forces obviously being central to this process.

What is Nature?

The fate of the planet in an era of deepening ecological crisis might well depend, in the final judgment, on philosophical approaches to nature -- a concept often romanticized to insignificance. Nowadays, theorists of diverse outlooks extend (usually obligatory) references to it. The first problem is that the reference easily slips into vague and formless usage, subject to myriad interpretations. Theorists are inclined to endow the natural world with wondrous ethical content – that is, a uniquely noble realm vulnerable to endless threats: industrialization, urban colonization, technology, military violence, consumerism, and so forth. Nature is readily wrapped in mystical, romantic, primitive virtues menaced by debilitating modernity, above all **capitalist** modernity.

With advancing levels of industrialization, the search for a social order in which humans do not exert dominion over nature would be futile. The vast growth of economic, political, military, even cultural power ultimately ensures such dominion. The overturning of capitalism – the first step being the elimination of private property in the system of production – has never in itself brought a human-nature balance, witness the destructive history of Soviet and other Communist

regimes across the twentieth century. That historical reality has never discouraged ecologists and other progressives from envisioning epic reunification of humans and nature, society, and the natural habitat in a new, more rational phase of development.

As powerful interests push the global ecosystem toward collapse, leftists of various stripes look toward a liberated order based on human rationality, ecological sanity, and sustainable development – requiring, in a word, full reunification of humans and nature. This outlook has, since the 1970s, been spearheaded by groups that might be loosely defined as "deep ecologists," advocates of biocentric ethics in which all parts (or most parts) of the natural habitat are deemed to have "inherent worth." Ecosystems develop and mature within constantly evolving, thriving, interactive communities of human and non-human life in the legacy of such theorists as Rousseau and Kropotkin. Paul Taylor refers to this approach simply as "the ethics of respect for nature."[43] From this viewpoint, humans do not (or should not) exert dominion over other forms of biological life, a maxim harshly at odds with the daily imprint of modern industrial society. Change depends on the capacity of humans to discover and enlarge their historical role as moral and political agents within local, self-managed communities.

Whatever its philosophical validity, the problem here is the highly implausible rejection of modernity itself, not to mention the absence of any political strategy for getting there – a virtual celebration of anti-politics. Leaving aside the obvious flaws of such utopianism, the vision of human-nature unity has forever been shared among ecologists of diverse outlooks. We have seen how Foster, Saito, and other proponents of an "ecological Marx" engage such utopianism while identifying it with Marx and Engels, thus rejecting the implications of a Promethean Marx. As shown by passages from the 1844 Manuscripts, Marx himself seemed dedicated to historical unification of humans with nature – a prospect conceivable, however, only with the final transcendence of capitalist power and class relations.

The complex interplay of humans and nature, mediated by production and labor, did in fact, inform a good deal of Marx's work – though, as mentioned, compromised by an instrumentalism present in the Manifesto and elsewhere. As humans transform the external world, they simultaneously transform themselves within the larger ensemble of relations. With the transition to socialism, it follows, longstanding divisions separating city and countryside would presumably shrink, though this process too is never specified. In any case, based on the logic of historical development, humans would dialectically interact with nature, re-appropriating it within a process of revolutionary change.

Beyond these and other similarly general propositions, however, Marx never developed a philosophy of nature that could anticipate the work of later ecologists; his categories of analysis were much too imprecise, malleable. As Saito points out, Marx did lay out a theory of metabolic rift that might be viewed as integral to the critique of the political economy, yet it appears this too was never fully elaborated or effectively combined with the broader critique.[44] Saito adds that Marx's "vision of the future society demands a careful and sustainable interaction with nature, based on a distinct recognition of its limits."[45] Yet this claim is muddied by the aforementioned productivism and instrumentalism that, as we have seen, pervades Marx's overall body of work.

Aside from a rather diffuse view of nature, Marx's theoretical limits just as critically extended to what is left out, diminished: the entire universe of nonhuman life, including other species that have long inhabited the earth, and are threatened as never before. In his dialectical treatment of (human) "species-being," integral to the transition from (human) necessity to freedom, Marx reveals a void never addressed by Saito, Foster, or other "Marx-as-ecologist" boosters. This problem becomes all the more illuminating once we consider that humans – with their deep levels of anthropocentrism and speciesism – continue to wage nonstop war against nonhuman nature, a savagery intensified under modern capitalism. At this point, the concept of "metabolic rift" so central to Saito's reading of Marx falls pathetically short of capturing an unthinkable reality; the distance between "war" and "rift" could not be wider.

For Marx, nonhuman beings simply never figured in his concept of "nature", never mattered within the ecological calculus. He refers to a "humanized nature" that reflects the "essential

powers of **man**" – another tribute, it turns out, to the ethos of instrumental rationality.[46] He writes: "Man makes his life-activity itself the object of his will and his consciousness. He has conscious life-activity . . . Conscious life-activity directly distinguishes man from animal life-activity. It is just because of this that he is a species-being."[47] Passages like this recur throughout Marx's work, not surprising given prevailing ideological norms of the period. It is commonplace nowadays to acknowledge the sentience, or life-purpose, of members of other species, increasingly so within ecological circles. Still, while Marx and Engels might be excused for this sparse understanding of nature, that merely reaffirms the severe limits of classical Marxism as a possible cornerstone of modern ecological thought. The problem resides less in the classical theory as such than in the unpardonable failure of more recent interpreters to question and transcend those limits.

The widening critique of speciesism actually goes back several decades, well before recent efforts to promote an "ecological Marx." Of course, Marx's own work could never benefit from the contributions of an entire generation of animal-rights research and theorizing. As early as the 1940s, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in their Dialectic of Enlightenment questioned how "mankind, instead of entering into a truly human condition, [was] sinking into a new kind of barbarism." Crucial to this dystopic view was a critique of ruling interests for their ruthless pursuit of superiority over the rest of society, over nature, overall nonhuman life within it.[48] For modern capitalism, animal populations were ritually subjected to unspeakable horrors – a savagery viewed as reflecting the absolute powers of human dignity and supremacy.[49] In such a gruesome world, "the whole earth bears witness to the glory of man."[50] This war against nature had all the features of a planned, routinized, celebrated assault on "animal existence."[51] Written several decades ago, these passages would barely offer glimpses into a future carnage of factory farms, slaughterhouses, medical experimentation, hunting as a sport, and myriad other contemporary forms of barbarism.

No longer a submerged issue, the systematic torture and murder of billions of animals yearly is better understood as intrinsic to the entire matrix of industrial and technological society, integral to both capitalism **and** post-capitalism. The practices are fully normalized, embedded in the basic rhythms of daily life: corporations, government, the military, churches, health care, the food system. While critical social theory might be expected to deconstruct **all** institutions and practices of domination, here we have an instance of intellectual work allowing for an inexplicable moral and political exemption. The unfathomable scale of this violence against nature far exceeds anything encompassed by the notion of "metabolic rift." Does such a "rift" ever apply to other species? On this point, John Sanbonmatsu is prompted to ask: "When atrocity becomes the very basis of society, does society not forfeit its right to call itself moral?"[52] Unfortunately, Marxism, in its different variants, has lent its credibility to this particularly savage "domination of nature." Here the all-too-familiar fetishism of Nature turns into the ugliest of fictions.

Sanbonmatsu argues that this global system of institutionalized brutality is simultaneously a "mode of production itself," profiting scandalously from animal goods, services, and resources – a sector of the political economy ignored only by dint of fierce determination.[53] Over the past decades, it has indeed become a mode of production (and consumption) without equal. Speciesism thus amounts to far more than an ideology: it fits squarely within an ensemble of relations, fundamental to the self-activity of humans in pursuit of their privileged "species-being." All the cherished signifiers of human "progress" – science, technology, industry, medicine, education – are routinely employed to advance this ubiquitous, intensifying war against nature. We know that a global meat complex that "processes" billions of animals yearly is widely regarded as a sign of affluence, development, good health, modernity. It is, incidentally, among the biggest contributors to global warming and assorted environmental dangers such as deforestation, ocean pollution, and biodiversity loss.[54]

Conventional political discourse that romanticizes the "unification of humans and nature," whether Marxist, liberal, or some other, is meant to sound enlightening but points toward exactly the opposite – a cruel fraud. Could such a fraud be morally tolerable within a viable socialist politics? Sanbonmatsu's answer: ". . . to affirm socialism without animal liberation is to affirm

a civilization based on a continual antagonism with the rest of nature."[55] Idealization of Nature (caps intentional) turns despotic under the most progressive of ideological covers. As for Marxism, even "ecological Marxism" in the name of "science" and "materialism," what ought to affirm deep moral, ecological, and political concerns end up obscured in the fog of productivism. It is no secret that neither Marx nor Engels (said to be a fox hunter) ever questioned the prejudice of anthropocentrism or speciesism in their own time, in effect laying the theoretical underpinnings of political debility for later generations of Marxists and socialists. As more refined technological methods of mass killing are employed by huge corporate meat and dairy interests, as nonhumans wind up more (not less) central to the power of agribusiness and source of capital accumulation, political opposition winds up silent and ultimately complicit. Meanwhile, the globalized power structure proceeds along with its routine, but deadly, course.

What kind of ecosocialism might flourish within such a yawning theoretical and political void? What kind of radical politics could effectively support this aggravated warfare against the natural habitat? What could justify a structure of power so willfully responsible for the worsening ecological crisis – contributing not only to climate change but to exhaustion of natural resources, destruction of biodiversity, and shrinking arable land, not to mention the depletion of oceans and forests? As the planet further descends into catastrophe, those few critical thinkers with the audacity to raise such deeply-ecological concerns are sadly derided by leftists as "extremists," "food fascists," and worse, often reminded that, after all, "Hitler was a vegetarian" (he was not, though it is irrelevant). Even the existing marginal opposition to speciesism is trivialized, the worst forms of animal exploitation comfortably ignored while more enlightened critics tend to the "bigger issues" and work to "save the planet."

One aspect of speciesism – what humans eat on a daily basis – is perhaps the most troublesome of all problems, yet the most concealed and least understood. Richard Oppenlander, in his unsettling book Comfortably Unaware, argues that meat consumption is doing more to destroy the Earth than anything else. "Global depletion in some form will occur," he writes, "simply because the earth can only support so many people doing so many things over so long a period of time." He adds: "We have developed a complex system of producing more and more animals that use more and more of our resources, while leaving a massive amount of waste, and climate change in their wake. . . This system has become complicated in that it is now heavily intertwined with our culture, politics, economics, and the suppression of the reality of its effect on our planet." Ecological rationality demands a public accounting of this dreadful reality, yet willful ignorance prevails instead. Oppenlander laments: "To make matters worse, individuals and institutions that are in a position to expose myths, enlighten the public, and change the direction of public opinion clearly are not doing so."[56] The reference here is to American public opinion, but it is just as applicable to most other countries.

Issues related to agriculture and food consumption deserve far more attention than they have gotten, especially when it comes to progressives and Marxists. As for Marx, his views on the topic did not extend very far. The authors of Food, Politics, and Society point out that he "overlooked the role of what we have called the 'food system' is itself a driver of social, economic, and political transformations."[57] This system, perhaps more than any other, lies at the core of historic changes in the relationship between agriculture and industry, agrarian and urban life, development and ecology – clearly vital to any in-depth understanding of the modern crisis, any move toward ecosocialism. Within this matrix, problems of everyday consumption, environmental deterioration, corporate power, and vast health challenges of our time are thoroughly interwoven.

Lester Brown, writing in Full Planet, Empty Plates, argues that food politics nowadays engages – or should engage – what is most central to facing the challenge of ecological unsustainability. Thus: "We are entering a time of chronic food insecurity, one that is leading to intense competition for control of land and water resources – in short, a new geopolitics of food."[58] Rising global meat consumption surely poses one of the biggest challenges – again, scarcely acknowledged, even among ecologists. More than at any time in history, the animal-based food system veers out

of sync with land availability, natural resources, climate stabilization, human health, and survival of thousands of other species. One can only ask: could such immeasurable human assault on "nature" be adequately captured through the notion of "metabolic rift"?

Returning to Marx, the very notion of harmony in natural relations had, in fact, already been torn asunder, fractured under the onslaught of industrialization, urbanization, and warfare. The dialectical synthesis of humanism-naturalism was never historically grounded, whether before or during the rise of capitalism. The concept of nature in Marx, Ted Benton argues, was always flawed by a sharp dualism visible, for example, in those frequent passages dividing humans from animals.[59] Humans arrogantly retain the capacity to treat (especially this part of) nature by means of crudely instrumental practices – a legacy ritually forwarded by later generations of Marxists and socialists. Those who celebrate an "ecological Marx" usually fall silent on the painful question of human-animal relations as if "nature" did not extend to many billions of nonhuman beings, other species with their own subject of life, their own capacity to suffer pain and loss, their close interaction with (and often dependency on) human populations. One can only conclude that such ethical neglect mirrors an incomplete, callous, utilitarian conception of nature.

In their book Creating an Ecological Society, Magdoff and Williams are perfectly content to proclaim the truism that all living organisms are connected to each other – integral to cohesive ecosystems -- then proceed to call forth Marx's refrain that humans are uniquely thinking, planning beings whereas other species remain trapped in their physical immediacy – only partially true, but in any case irrelevant to a world of unspeakable atrocities committed by humans against animals. While conceding meekly that modern agribusiness is "cruel to animals," Magdoff and Williams quickly curtail their passion for nature and concern for corporate savagery: the global meat complex is fine so long as it is organized around "integrated farming systems" that (with meat products) supply high-quality protein foods – ignoring the fact that plant foods supply better, healthier, and more ecologically-friendly sources of nutrition (not just protein). By conveniently ignoring the horrendous impact of animal-based economies, the authors can go no further than vague references to "humane practices."[60]

Armed with this tormented logic, contemporary Marxists predictably drift toward the camp of corporate giants like Tyson Foods, Monsanto, Cargill, and McDonald's – all deriving their criminal profits from an all-out war against nature. Formally progressive ideas coexist with tightening systems of domination so pervasive, so normalized, as to be nearly invisible. The cruelest violations of nonhuman life are taken for granted, allowing humans to psychologically and socially detach themselves from daily mechanisms of destruction.[61] All the accumulated references to "species-being," human-nature unity, and liberation from necessity can never conceal this systematic and deliberate transgression of the natural world – a topic entirely ignored by Saito.

Science – or Scientism?

Was the revolutionary theory developed by Marx across three or more decades actually a form of **scientific** analysis, as many later interpreters have claimed, or something entirely different – more akin to a **critical** theory, a "philosophy of praxis" affirming the unity of theory and politics? The question as to whether Marx's work, on the whole, was scientific no doubt matters, as its status determines how we view its numerous historical claims, its political efficacy, and surely also its ecological relevance. (While Marx and Engels worked in tandem on some major writings, epistemological differences appeared to surface toward the end of their careers.) Debates over to what extent classical Marxism could lay claim to scientific validity – or could be viewed in such terms – would pervade the tradition up to the present. Champions of an "ecological Marx," including Saito and Foster, have generally arrived at a scientific reading of both Marx and Engels, endowing their work with a firm grounding in some variant of "dialectical materialism." Both

Saito and Foster do make a point to distance their approach from cruder forms of positivism.

While Marx's outlook has been widely understood as "materialistic" (thus also presumably scientific), the same theoretical edifice that would by the 1930s morph into official Soviet Marxism, it is worth noting that Marx himself scarcely employed the term in any philosophically consistent way. Engels was more inclined to embrace materialism in his theoretical writings, most often in texts like Dialectics of Nature, completed after Marx's death. Marx's philosophy, going back to his early years, actually differed from that of Engels – and the later scientific pretensions of Kautsky, Plekhanov, and many leading figures in European social democracy. Engels had argued in Dialectics that matter fundamentally precedes ideas and consciousness; the subjective realm was little more than a reflection of the external world, worthy at best of secondary importance. Marx himself never fully shared this outlook. In fact, the stricter version of materialism later adopted by Engels and his disciples was identical to the very mechanistic theories Marx had earlier criticized in Theses on Feuerbach.

Marx's own philosophy was never strictly materialist or scientific in ways his writings have so often been interpreted. He remained much too indebted to his strong Hegelian origins to adopt such an outlook, yet critical enough of Hegel and other German idealists to avoid following in their footsteps. For Marx, historical development was much too complex to be regarded as a simple unfolding of objective forces independent of human thought and action; social change always depended on some type of subjective intervention. It might be argued that Marx's epistemology was formed sui generis, a dialectical synthesis of earlier materialism and traditional idealism – a prelude to what Gramsci would later refer to as a "philosophy of praxis," the approach both believed was most consistent with the demands of revolutionary politics. As such, it avoided the rigid dichotomy subject/object of historical transformation.

For Marx, conscious human activity (including politics) was fundamental to revolutionary change. From this standpoint, it seems probable that Marx's heightened attention to the natural sciences after 1868 did not necessarily coincide with efforts to adopt a scientific methodology for purposes of explaining human behavior or, by extension, the dynamics of social change. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that Marx shared all facets of the later Engels' more rigorous materialism, though, as mentioned, he was at least partially involved in some thought-processes that informed Anti-Duhring. There is no evidence to suggest Marx viewed historical development in rigidly scientific terms consistent with Engels' later work – or with Nicholai Bukharin's materialist sociology of the 1920s. In this realm as in others, what later became known as "scientific" theory, within and outside Marxism, turned out to be no more than normal pursuit of knowledge through well-grounded historical analysis, with positivism often something of a veneer. The much-celebrated "science of society" in effect amounted to meticulous efforts to identify and analyze broad tendencies of historical development.

One problem with materialist philosophy is that its overwhelming focus on the objective (material) side of history must inevitably devalue the subjective side, which Marx himself viewed as indispensable to revolutionary change. Without decisive political intervention – a realm of creative vision and action – it would be hard to imagine a process of far-reaching transformation. Longstanding debates over whether and to what degree a strict materialist approach can be attributed to Engels alone has served to muddy the scientific imprimatur of classical Marxism. European social democracy, for its part, was for years divided between Kautsky's uncompromising materialism and Bernstein's "pragmatic" reformism, while Rosa Luxemburg has usually been identified with the "spontaneist" masses-make-history approach. Lenin, influenced by Plekhanov, initially embraced a scientific approach laid out in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, then turned toward a praxis-oriented philosophy in the 1914-16 Philosophical Notebooks where he is said to have "rediscovered" Hegel. The main architect of the Bolshevik Party and October Revolution, Lenin would naturally be inclined to valorize subjective intervention (later referred to as the "external element") as essential to transformative politics. Toward the end of his life, Lenin (and other Bolsheviks) came to regard "dialectical materialism" as a recipe for intellectual contemplation and political passivity – a rather conservative outlook. It would be Stalin, of

course, who managed to bring "Diamat" into the realm of official Soviet ideology.[62]

The limits of scientific materialism become all the more evident once classical Marxism is situated in its historical period – the early decades of capitalist development. While the theory might have been identified with elements of universality, even the brilliant Marx and Engels could never fully escape the limits of their era; they too were in some way products of the Zeitgeist. It is thus hardly coincidental that Saito's treatment of Marx revolves around categories of classical political economy – capital formation, commodity production, reification, exchange relations, and so forth. This makes sense as part of a faithful effort to capture the main dynamics of Marx's thought, meaning Saito's treatment is appropriately historicized. Of course, the world has changed beyond recognition since the mid-nineteenth century, a market-centered capitalism superseded long ago by a globalized system of corporate-state domination that would be unrecognizable to Marx and Engels. We have available no widely agreed-upon-identifiable scientific methods – no rigorous "laws" – that could thoroughly analyze this epochal change, much less the epochal political events of the twentieth century.

The contemporary world system, associated with advanced capitalist rationalization along with imperialism, wars, and revolutions, bursts the old categories of early capitalism that serve to delimit the scope of Saito's work. These newer factors scarcely enter Saito's panorama of concerns, understandable given his focus. Scientific materialism obscures more than it illuminates when facing the contours of historical disorder and lawlessness. Insofar as this is true, prospects for renewed ecological theorizing based on traditional categories would appear futile. The problem, once again, can hardly be laid at the doorstep of Marx and Engels, or even Kautsky and Plekhanov. Rather, the difficulty lies in strained efforts by "ecological Marx" proponents to scientifically legitimate their claims of a new theoretical breakthrough. Viewed historically, therefore, theory (Marxist or otherwise) cannot but reflect the contours of its own time. In his dialectical synthesis of materialism and idealism, Marx himself formulated a philosophy of praxis sufficiently historicized to avoid certain pitfalls. Not so, unfortunately, for so many "heirs" of Marx. By the late twentieth century, the system of corporate globalization had already grown so concentrated, so expansive, so riddled with newer conflicts that more resonant categories of analysis would be obligatory.

Whatever its scientific claims, one can see how theory evolving within an organizational setting can become easily ritualized, neutralized by oligarchical pressures, rendered more or less lifeless. Of course, Marxism has not been spared such pressures, a tendency explored by Frankfurt School theorists, especially by Herbert Marcuse in his classic Soviet Marxism. Marcuse writes that for Soviet Marxism the theory ". . . has undergone a significant change: it has been transformed from a mode of critical thought into a universal 'world outlook' and universal method with rigidly fixed rules and regulations, and this transformation destroys the dialectic more thoroughly than any revision. The change corresponds to that of Marxism itself from theory to ideology; dialectic is vested with the magical qualities of official thought and communication." Here Marxism "ceases to be the organon of revolutionary consciousness and practice and enters the superstructure of an established system of domination."[63]

In the West, the fate of twentieth-century Marxism has more or less mirrored the very trajectory of capitalist rationalization, shaped and re-reshaped by the process of modernization and what is essential to it: science, technology, and bureaucracy. Any supposed "laws of development" here have little in common with capitalist tendencies emphasized within classical Marxist texts. This is not to suggest that Marx's theorization of the capitalist political economy for his time – whatever its flaws – is to be judged as anything but superlative. By the late twentieth century, however, the steady expansion of corporate-state power, transnational institutions, and technological rationality called for newer categories of historical analysis.

Among the newer concerns (leaving aside the ecological crisis) is the growth (and use) of military force, which dominates the global landscape at a time when resource wars are sure to intensify -- a crisis and response pattern that in itself explodes the conceptual parameters of nineteenth-century Marxism. Capitalist globalization has unleashed the destructive power of militarism and

war, from World WII to the present, carried out, technologized, and legitimated through the vast achievements of modern capitalism, culminating in sophisticated modes of technowar. Postwar U.S. militarism alone has brought unspeakable carnage to the world, driven and legitimated by science and technology. Referring to the Vietnam debacle, James William Gibson writes: "War managers are at the top of the stratification system. They think in instrumental categories taken from technology and production systems, and the business accounting rationales of the debit and credit . . . and had a virtual monopoly on socially-accepted 'scientific' knowledge."[64] As with the architects of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – and urban terror bombings in many countries -- that "knowledge" was fully detached from its horrific consequences.

Several decades ago, Horkheimer's seminal distinction between "traditional" and "critical" theory situated classical Marxism within the latter, its passion for regularity, rigor, and lawlike tendencies resonant with the "given order of things." Such mechanistic thinking, in his view, could never grasp the chaotic, irregular, indeterminate elements of historical change – precisely what happened to characterize so much of twentieth-century politics. The dynamics of social psychology, the point at which individuals engage society and history, was met by "traditional" theorists with some indifference, probably deemed beyond theoretical coherence owing to its often irrational, unpredictable character. The more scientific (or **scientistic**) the framework, the more burdensome will be efforts to analyze historical events – one of several reasons the transfer of investigative methods from physical to social sciences was destined to fail.[65] The fact that Marx himself never fell for such pretenses did not, unfortunately, deter later disciples.

For scientific materialists, the space for collective subjectivity (politics foremost) was something of an after-thought, peripheral at best. The search for ironclad regularities in social behavior has obvious anti-political consequences; one reason Lenin chose to abandon his earlier materialist philosophy when what Georg Lukacs called the "actuality of revolution" gained momentum in Russia. On this point, Sheldon Wolin has more recently called attention to the innately "fugitive" character of politics – a realm given to the unsettled and unpredictable, resistant to established patterns.[66] Experience suggests that political action has rarely been theorized with precision, for that would clash with the typically multifaceted, unstable features of historical change. No one has yet discovered a "political science" reliable enough to determine what truths might be valid across widely-diverse ideological viewpoints, and Marxism has been no exception. The standpoint of objectivity or neutrality cannot be sustained in a context where knowledge must be obtained through selective criteria of focus and interpretation. In Wolin's words: "Perforce, a political theory is among many other things a sum of judgments shaped by the theorist's notion of what matters, and embodying a series of discriminations about where one province begins and another leaves off."[67] There is no convincing reason why Marxism should be exempt from such maxims.

Kindred arguments were put forward decades ago within Marxism itself, most systematically by Gramsci. In re-framing Marx's original philosophy of praxis, Gramsci turned his attention to the nexus history-philosophy-politics that he contrasted with the more fashionable materialism of his day, identified first with the Italian Marxist Amadeo Bordiga and later with Soviet theorist Bukharin, greatly praised by Foster. In the Prison Notebooks, Gramsci attacked such materialism is both philosophically and politically constricted, a source of intellectual detachment. His work turned to an emphasis on historicism, since: "The philosophy of a historical epoch is nothing other than the 'history' of that epoch itself . . .", here revealing the influence of Benedetto Croce and Italy's first Marxist, Labriola.[68] To properly engage Marxism, it too would have to be historicized to avoid schematic or ritualized formulations. In Gramsci's case, the philosophy of praxis captured a revolutionary impulse generally regarded as fundamental to Marxist politics. Transhistorical generalizations, abstract regularities, and rigorous "laws," he argued, have maximum validity only under conditions of mass disempowerment, political inactivity. Thus: "It should be observed that political action tends precisely to rouse the masses from passivity, in other words, to destroy the laws of large numbers."[69] Elsewhere Gramsci frames Marxism as a theoretical structure with special temporal relevance in the form

of "absolute historicism."[70] Put differently: "Separated from the theory of history and political philosophy cannot be other than metaphysics . . . ."[71] (Here Gramsci in effect proceeded to turn the scientific materialism of Engels, Plekhanov, and Bukharin on its head, dismissing it as a newer form of "metaphysics".)

Proponents of an "ecological Marx" grounded in scientific methods are usually dismissive of "Western Marxists" like Gramsci and Lukacs owing to their supposed distance from the real world of political activity – a criticism also directed at theorists of the Frankfurt School. In the case of Gramsci, however, the charge is entirely misplaced: in his early years, Gramsci was a leading activist in the Italian Socialist party, then became an influential theorist of the factory-council movement, before co-founding the Italian Communist Party (PCI), serving as a parliamentary deputy, and spending the last decade of his life in fascist prisons. This biographical reference is meaningful insofar as it contradicts the longstanding fiction that a critique of strict materialism implies a form of religious or spiritual resignation.

Marxism in History

Traversing the modern historical terrain, it seems worth revisiting the question as to whether Marxist theory can be a source of oppositional politics for the twenty-first century. Such questions, we know, were posed long ago for the **twentieth** century. Does the case for an "ecological Marx," however scientific, have resonance for an era of deepening global crisis? Earlier Marxism in its multiple variants did, of course, help fuel the rise of movements, unions, parties, and governments in Europe and beyond, though increasingly with limited anti-system possibilities. The rich intellectual heritage continues to this day, within artistic circles, universities, and media culture, especially in the West. In deradicalized form, it continues to provide ideological legitimacy for such regimes as China, Vietnam, and North Korea.

A Marxism of sorts first emerged in the period spanning the 1840s to 1870s, then reached its heyday between the 1880s and 1920s, crucial to the rise of both Second (Socialist) and Third (Communist) Internationals. In some ways, a mirror reflection of early capitalism, Marxism was widely understood in terms of its imputed universality, even scientificity. Yet the main analytical focus of traditional Marxism – competitive markets, commodity production, proletarian expansion, intensifying class conflict – would eventually lose political relevance in an age of merging corporate and state interests, oligarchic rule, militarization, technological rationality, and novel forms of ideological hegemony. The modern behemoth would be reinforced by rapidly-sweeping globalization – not only in the economy, but in politics, culture, technology, and communications. Meanwhile, the post-World War II era witnessed unimpeded growth of the U.S. as a leading superpower, an imperial Leviathan with hundreds of military bases scattered across the globe, launching pad for perpetual wars, and armed with enough nuclear weapons to destroy the planet many times over.

Since just after World War I, anti-system politics has experienced a steady decline – whether speaking of labor movements, local councils, social movements, political parties, or international organizations. Revolutionary optimism that might have infused the first decades of the twentieth century continued to wane, thanks in part to the rise of both fascism and social democracy. By the end of the century, it could be said that Marxism no longer presented a threat to capitalism anywhere on the planet. Despite its ongoing dysfunctions, contradictions, and crises, modern state-capitalism is today probably stronger than ever, seemingly immune to direct overthrow. Hardly anyone in the twenty-first century believes the famous economic crisis-tendencies of capitalism will pave the way toward socialism – though crisis-tendencies, of a different sort, do indeed persist.

Given such reality, obvious questions arise – among them, whether this deterioration of Marxist politics might stem from the kind of scientific claims we have come to associate with the portrait of an "ecological Marx." What might be the efficacy of a materialist philosophy like that

embraced by Saito and Foster at a time when distinctly political hopes are so remote? Facing the specter of obsolescence, where does an intellectual paradigm rooted in the very distant past achieve unmovable certitude in the face of an unprecedented, complex, rapidly-moving global crisis? My conclusion, evident from arguments presented so far, is that Marxism has become so theoretically marginal that hopes for an "ecological Marx" are now best regarded as illusory.

The Marxist tradition – notably that tendency adhering most closely to the classics, to scientific materialism – has been a poor guide to the most consequential developments and events of twentieth-century politics, and beyond. As noted, it has long been commonplace that the Bolshevik Revolution violated nearly every precept of Marxist theory that preceded it, despite later adoption of the "Marxist-Leninist" label by the Soviet and other Communist regimes. The Russian success was not widely anticipated before the war, much less predicted, by Marxists at the time, many fearful of Bonapartism. Following the Bolshevik conquest of power, Gramsci wrote his seminal "Revolution Against Capital," referring to a historical moment made possible by imperialism and war rather than the "lifeless facts" of political economy. The work of Marx and Engels, it turned out, had, in reality, little to offer Lenin and the Bolsheviks. For Gramsci, a real living revolution in Russia collided with old theoretical schemas, however elaborate and rigorous. Those schemas allowed no room for the socialist insurrection in countries that had not yet experienced capitalist industrialization, and Russia was still largely a peasant society, with no liberal-democratic past until World War I. But events ultimately proved more decisive, more powerful than even the most sophisticated conceptual paradigms.[72]

Drawn to Lenin despite earlier involvement in the Turin factory-council movement, Gramsci already by 1918 saw advantages in a vanguard party that could orchestrate epic historical change. No doubt Lenin's Jacobinism brought to Gramsci' mind the rich Italian legacy of Machiavelli and The Prince.[73] The party functioned not only as a mechanism for seizing state power but as a vehicle of mass mobilization – neither concern seriously addressed within classical Marxism. In Russia, of course, capitalism was both poorly-developed and mostly foreign, meaning that revolutionary change would have to proceed against the main contours of Capital and the world it reflected, against what Gramsci called a "book of the bourgeoisie". He wrote: "Why should they [Russians] wait for the history of England to be repeated in Russia?, adding: "History is not a math calculation; it does not possess a decimal system, a progressive enumeration of equal quantities . . .".[74] In the end, despite all the inflated claims of Engels, Kautsky, Plekhanov, and (in Italy) Bordiga, actual historical forces ended up sweeping aside "every pre-established schema".[75]

By virtue of his searing critique of the nexus economism/spontaneism, Lenin was able to "solve" the problem of revolutionary consciousness left open by the Marxist classics. The focus, as noted, was on what Lukacs would later refer to as the "actuality of the revolution" – that is, a sharp turn toward the subjective element of historical change. Strict theoretical formulas were disdained as a path toward ideological passivity and political inertia.[76] Since there were precious few insights from Marx and Engels as to how class solidarity was expected to develop, Lenin's stark response was that **mass consciousness**, under conditions of bourgeois rule, could never escape its own social immediacy. That would be the task of revolutionary intellectuals who, able to operate more freely against a suffocating power structure, would furnish the badly-needed "external element" as a political vanguard. Wrote Lukacs after the revolution: "The Leninist party concept represents the most radical break with the mechanistic and fatalistic vulgarization of Marxism."[77] (The great Hungarian theorist of class consciousness would himself come around to Leninism in the years following the Bolshevik Revolution.)

It turned out that classical Marxism would have little to say about the most dramatic events of the twentieth century: several Communist revolutions, the rise of fascism, the scourge of imperialism and militarism, two world wars, the phenomenon of corporate globalization. As for the Bolshevik Revolution, it opened up a new phase of revolutionary change at a juncture of imperialism, wars, Jacobin politics, the ascendancy of state power – well beyond the scope of Marx and Engels. The October events were a product of richly-complex variables, not least being the decisive role of a vanguard party. Contrary to any widely-accepted "laws" of historical

transformation, Lenin and the Bolsheviks set about reordering society on their own terms, relying heavily on instruments of political organization and state power.

Contrary to facile generalizations about capitalism (e.g., the "falling rate of profit"), the variables here were multiple, rapidly-changing, global, largely unpredictable. Commenting on the Russian events, E. H. Carr wrote: "It would have been an astonishing anomaly if that revolution, far removed in time and space from anything Marx knew, had conformed in detail to the prescriptions of classical Marxism."[78] Indeed Bolshevik exploits conformed more closely to Lenin's What is to be Done? than to anything Marx wrote in Capital or any other text. Lenin himself eventually had no problem with such an assessment. Writing in Left-Wing Communism, after the revolution, he reflected: "History as a whole, and the history of revolutions, in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more multiform, more lively and ingenious than is imagined by even the best parties, the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes."[79]

One can go further: revolutionary movements, by definition, involve chaos, disruption, and uncertainty under circumstances where the lives of millions of people are overturned, their habits, rituals, and patterns of social existence altered, probably forever. That was emphatically the case in Russia, roughly duplicated in later twentieth-century Communist upheavals. Writing in The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, Lenin asked: "Are there historical laws governing revolution which know of no exceptions? No, no such law exists. These laws only apply to what is typical, to what Marx once termed the ideal, in the sense of an average, normal, typical capitalism".[80] (There has never been anything resembling "typical capitalism.") Most of all, Lenin was a great believer in creative, even Promethean intervention – a dreamer, romantic, utopian, adventurer – in the service of the revolution.

In reality, Leninism marked not so much a "vulgarization" of Marx but a process of **overturning**, or negating, as Gramsci had essentially argued. What earlier theorists had not seen, according to Lukacs, was the dramatic historical (and political) impact that imperialism and war would have not only on Russia but across the world. This necessary insight would have its validity repeated across later decades, transforming geopolitics forever. The Marxist classics offered little wisdom here, devoid as they were of any useful theory of revolutionary change. Leninism, on the other hand, would be decisive for insurrectionary politics across the twentieth century, the vehicle of a party-state commanding enough to destroy the old centers of power. They were all to some degree "revolutions against Capital": Russia, China, Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Cuba. All succeeded in the historical context of imperialism, war, and popular struggles against foreign occupation.[81] Mass energies were galvanized by an intense nationalism that politicized not only workers but peasants, the middle strata, and other groups. Once state power was taken, Leninist elites pursued two interwoven objectives: national independence and economic modernization, first visible in the Soviet path charted in the 1920s. Those objectives made sense in countries that were not yet industrialized, a **reversal** of classical Marxism as the primacy of economics gave way to the primacy of politics.

If Marxism was never much of a guide to actual revolutions, it would become even less relevant to those (post-capitalist) societies as they evolved over time. The eventual trajectory was either bureaucratic centralism (the USSR, North Korea) or some variant of state-capitalism (Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam). While elites adopted "Marxism-Leninism" as legitimating doctrine for maturing Communist regimes, that ideology bore little resemblance to actual development much less basic categories of Marxist theory. The process of ideological ritualization went so far in the Soviet Union – became so detached from everyday reality -- as to eventually contribute to regime collapse. Since the Cuban events of 1959-60, when agrarian revolt rapidly turned Communist, there has been no revolution like those mentioned above, an expanse of fully six decades. More telling, there have been no victorious proletarian revolutions in any advanced capitalist society.

As for working-class upsurges in any setting, only **four** have achieved what might be considered revolutionary potential: Italy in 1919-20, Spain in 1936-39, Italy during World War II,

Poland in the early 1980s (directed against **Communist** rule). In fact, only the first Italian case – the great postwar **Biennio Rosso** uprisings – would broadly fit the conventional Marxist idea of proletarian revolt against capitalist power, which failed exactly one century ago owing to its geographical (and political) isolation. That failure would immediately be followed by the world's first fascist conquest of power, which revealed the very uneven level of class consciousness among northern Italian workers.[82] Across Europe since World War II, labor has generally supported unions, parties, and (both local and national) governments that have uniformly experienced deradicalization.

If years of warfare gave rise to a mass insurgency in Italy during 1919-20, similar conditions materialized toward the end of World War II, giving rise to the anti-Nazi Resistance movement. As in the case of Leninist revolutions, this was a multiclass "historical bloc" mobilized around strong nationalist appeals, usually led mostly by Socialists and Communists. Between 1942 and 1945, the Italian Communists grew from a pre-war nucleus of perhaps five thousand militants to a major political force with over two million members and control of several large cities and some provinces. Partisan forces across the country were incited by many of the same conditions as in Russia, China, and other aforementioned cases. None could be explained within a Marxist framework.

For the history of proletarian upheavals as such, the record since the **Biennio Rosso** has been dismal, while even that episode is frequently described as "the revolution that failed." The overall trajectory of decline can be situated partly within the relentless process of capitalist rationalization, less a function of leadership betrayal or working-class "immaturity." The epic growth (and convergence) of corporate and state power, the bureaucratization of society, and new forms of ideological hegemony have bolstered elite power, institutionalized class conflict, and reinforced political legitimation throughout Europe and beyond. Further, with heightened rationalization and globalization has come to the political decline of the working class in both numbers and leverage.

While Marxism in scholastic form retains appeal to intellectual groups in the West and elsewhere, in both theory and practice, it no longer represents even a slight threat to capitalist stability. The capitalism described by Marx – and faithfully reconstructed by Saito – was a system of commodity production, market relations, expanding proletariat, limited state power, and relatively feeble ideological controls. Weber's emphasis on state-corporate domination, technological rationality, and bureaucratization of public life far better captured the twentieth-century capitalist developmental pattern. Attention to ruling-elite capacity to erect a solid apparatus of domination was foundational to the work not only of Weber but (in different ways) also of Gramsci, the Austro-Marxists, and so-called "elite theorists" -- Robert Michels, Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosco – all to varying degrees influenced by Weber. That influence would extend to the later work of C. Wright Mills in The Power Elite, which combined Weberian and Marxist approaches. None of these theorists, however, dealt systematically with the problem of globalization and the ways in which it served to expanded capitalist power and weakened political opposition. To the extent this was the case, one cannot but wonder how the phenomenon of globalization could profoundly alter a body of theory shaped by nineteenth-century capitalism. Whatever the current prospects for ecosocialism, the path forward is destined to move along rather different tracks than those laid down by Marx and Engels.

As noted, the sources and dynamics of revolutionary consciousness were never adequately explored by Marx or Engels. It could be that for the Marxist classics, this problem would somehow get worked out through the very dialectics of historical transformation – a premise that, as we have seen, could not be sustained. What then? Lenin (Jacobinism) and Bernstein (reformism) would arrive at their own competing solutions at the start of the twentieth century, others joining the strategic debate later. None, however, would find much theoretical solace in earlier Marxist writings. Where such crucial questions were left unattended, there could be no meaningful revolutionary theory. That would turn out to be yet another implication of Gramsci's "Revolution against **Capital**": the texts contained nothing very helpful about the social

psychology of consciousness formation, much less the organizational and strategic requirements for winning state power.

It might seem puzzling that neither Marx nor Engels, dedicated socialists, ever arrived at a theory of revolutionary politics, but that is indeed the case. One difficulty was the very fragmented character of their work on topics related to politics and the state, which in any case they had devalued as "superstructure" relative to the economic "base." That could at least partly account for their meager interest in processes whereby those most exploited might arrive at the psychological rejection of the status quo – meaning a traumatic break with long-established patterns of social and individual life. We have seen that Lenin believed workers could never develop class consciousness when left to their own resources, needing a particularly robust "external element." Confined to trade-union activity, the proletariat would never get beyond a path of limited reforms. Revolutionary politics, on the other hand, would depend on the organizational and ideological coherence of a fighting party. In this, Lenin discovered a vital historical truth: class consciousness would never arise from organic, local, spontaneous activity, nor would it result from the development of "objective" historical forces. Lenin's epic departure from classical Marxism would be taken up (and further elaborated) by Gramsci and other Marxists of the Third International -- a linchpin, as noted, of twentieth-century Communist revolutions.

For both Lenin and Gramsci, the episodic and unpredictable ("fugitive") moments of historical change, marked a cycle of responses and counter-responses, was more decisive than any "science" or "laws" of development. Class consciousness was formed within a complex ensemble of psychological attitudes, feelings, and beliefs, most keenly aroused at times of social turmoil and political breakdown, Gramsci writing that "history sweeps aside every pre-established schema."[83]

If Marx had been able to critically analyze the broad patterns of nineteenth-century capitalism, his theory paid little attention to the subjective elements of change, despite suggestive insights here and there. On the one hand, Marx looked to the steady expansion of an oppressed, alienated proletariat whose very life-conditions would generate anti-capitalist consciousness, a step toward the transition to socialism. Widening contradictions of an economic system that could never satisfy general material needs, one that perpetuates opposition, would sooner or later give rise to (both objective **and** subjective) revolutionary conditions. Consciousness itself never seemed much of a priority insofar as it was thought to be a natural outgrowth of intensifying class conflict. Marx's **political** outlook, in fact, suffered from the hindrance of a simple rationalist psychology, where material self-interest would be seamlessly translated into anti-capitalist attitudes and beliefs. We know from abundant historical evidence; however, that mass politics rarely follows such rationalist premises.

Marx thus never arrived at an understanding of how people might become active (collective) subjects or agents of history – how alienation might be overcome. References to a future socialist society do not suffice. This very question was faced head-on by Lenin and Gramsci, as they embarked on a journey of revolutionary politics. That defect of classical Marxism as it evolved following Marx's death was partly a function of scientific materialism that, for Europe at least, would become the burdensome legacy of Engels and Kautsky, the same legacy resurrected decades later by proponents of an "ecological Marx." The political outlook shared by Lenin and Gramsci revolved around the issue of ideological domination that Gramsci would famously define in the Prison Notebooks as "hegemony": the role of religion, education, and culture in sustaining ruling-class legitimacy.[84] That legitimacy, as historical experience reveals, allows even shaky power structures to survive great economic crises and even wars. Over the past century, of course, mechanisms of ideological control available to capitalist elites (above all in media and communications) have expanded beyond anything imagined by Lenin or Gramsci. For that same period, Weber foresaw that capitalist rationalization would contain insurgent consciousness and subvert radical politics. Gramsci also understood this process fully, laid out in his oft-overlooked essay "Americanism and Fordism" in the Notebooks.[85] Concentrated power would enlarge organizational and ideological controls across public life, most emphatically in the expanding

Fordist (Taylorized) workplace. As workers and others submit to hegemonic norms, beliefs, and laws, their social individuality yields to relentless conformist pressures.

The problem of revolutionary politics within Marxist theory deserves far more attention than it has generally received. Here it is worth considering how twentieth-century thinkers (Marxists and others) managed to fill a void in the Marxist classics regarding consciousness-formation and, by extension, **political** conditions of an expected shift from capitalism to socialism. From Lenin to Gramsci, from Lukacs to Marcuse, the verdict regarding a potential class-conscious proletariat in the West has been typically bleak: capitalist development, in whatever setting, meant subordination of workers to bourgeois domination – a conclusion at odds with Marx's well-known optimism. Many decades after Marx and Engels passed from the scene, that problem for Marxists would remain and even deepen.

Lenin's argument, mostly taken for granted by later generations of Communists, stressed that the power elite would always have the upper hand "for the simple reason that bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than socialist ideology, that it is more fully developed, and that it has at its disposal immeasurably more means of dissemination."[86] While Marxism has emphasized the organic (or spontaneous) element of workplace struggles, Lenin (against prevailing Social-Democratic opinion) assigned Promethean importance to a radical intelligentsia, drawing on its unique tradition in Russia.

Given a lack of faith in proletarian self-activity, Lenin turned to an organization of professional cadres – the new repository of socialist consciousness. Leninism would later have its well-known authoritarian consequences – and of course, its critics, starting with prominent Mensheviks such as Peter Struve and the eminent Plekhanov, later including the radicals Rosa Luxemburg and Anton Pannekoek, both dedicated to mass spontaneity. Among Lenin's harsher critics was Jan Waclaw Machajski, convinced the Bolsheviks constituted the makings of a "new class" of intellectuals aiming to manipulate popular energies behind industrialization under a contrived (socialist) banner. As for the workers, still bereft of self-activity, they would go on being exploited and controlled by just another ruling elite.[87]

What favored a revolutionary outcome was a large-scale organization, built on command principles, dynamic leadership, coherent ideology, a strategy for winning state power. Machajski's thesis, on the other hand, happened to finally converge with Weber's thesis of capitalist rationalization, which fixated on the expanding role of government, bureaucracy, and technology integral to modern European economies. Ironically, at the very moment, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were drawn to organizational politics, American capitalism (driven by auto assembly-line production) was introducing tighter controls in the form of Taylorized scientific management.

The Weberian theory would have considerable influence across succeeding decades – first among the "elite theorists" and Austro-Marxists, then among Frankfurt School intellectuals (notably Marcuse) and the later work of Mills. Even Gramsci, as noted, bore the imprint of Weber. Michels, in contrast to Lenin, called attention to the innately conservative features of large-scale organization, visible during his own time for its anti-democratic impact on unions, parties, and governments. The German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) that Michels studied was just as vulnerable as any other – its leadership able to take advantage of the psychological "incompetence of the masses," a motif that in the end differed little from Lenin's "ideological enslavement" argument. Wrote Michels in 1911: "Political organization leads to power. But power is always conservative."[88] And: "Thus the majority of human beings, in a condition of eternal tutelage, are predestined by tragic necessity to submit to domination by a small minority, and must be content to constitute the pedestal of an oligarchy."[89] Even the most determined oppositional forces, it turned out, would likely wind up assimilated into the process of capitalist rationalization.

While Gramsci's view of ideological hegemony called attention to the **general** capacity of ruling elites to legitimate their rule through a mix of cultural traditions and ideological discourses, less well known was his essentially Weberian focus on Fordist control of the capitalist workplace. "Hegemony," Gramsci argued, "is born in the factory," noting that Fordism develops to the

point where it "succeeds in making the whole life of the nation revolve around production," leaving the masses in a state of alienation and disempowerment – the focus here on "production" over "commodities," worth noting. He wrote: "In America rationalization has determined the need to elaborate a new type of man suited to the new type of work and productive process." That "new type of work" was typically suited to the "trained gorilla" of Fordist lore.[90] In another twist of irony, Lenin had (in the years after the revolution) grown fascinated with Taylorism and its Soviet equivalent is known as "edinonachalia," or one-man management.

During this same period, Lukacs, in History and Class Consciousness, sought a different line of argumentation, looking to resuscitate Marx's fetishism of commodities through the concept of reification. Marx, it will be recalled, wrote in Capital that the commodity process intrinsic to capitalism had become fetishized as it transforms relations between humans, between humans and nature, into relations between objects. Capitalism degrades humans into the status of objects, while objects, as such, acquire human attributes. Insofar as bourgeois society matures into a system fully dependent on objects (and also objective laws), those engaged in the labor process lose any sense of self, their collective subjectivity and autonomy – and finally, their psychological capacity for revolutionary action. Capitalist development would forever be shrouded in ideological mystification. For Marx, as noted, no concept of transcendence is forthcoming – thus, no identifiable (subjective) exit from the existing order of things.

Lukacs provocatively took up this motif at a time when Gramsci and others were departing from the classic texts. It seems the Hungarian theorist wanted to deepen Marx's fixation on commodities – notably their mystifying consequences for the proletariat – while simultaneously looking for a way out, ultimately arriving at Leninism. At a time when capitalism was entering its rationalized (or state-capitalist) phase across Europe, Lukacs opted for the motif of "universally-dominant commodities," where the "fate of the worker becomes the fate of capitalism as a whole."[91] (Here Lukacs anticipates Karl Polanyi's 1944 classic The Great Transformation, where marketization permeates and defines capitalist society.) This familiar over-emphasis on markets, sometimes mythologized into "free markets" or "market fundamentalism," had been effectively countered by Weberian theory.)[92] Writing in 1923, Lukacs argued that "for the first time in history the whole of society is subjected . . . to a unified economic process, and the fate of every member of society is determined by unified laws".[93] In other words, the proletariat was subjected to such crushing (apparently lawlike) ideological domination, that no exit seemed possible – that is until the heroic Leninist party comes to the rescue.

The Lukacsian view of class consciousness was, in fact, consistent with the overall pessimism of "Western Marxism": the failure of revolutionary opposition in Europe, the collapse of "permanent revolution," led to capitalist stabilization – or was it the reverse? Frankfurt School theorists would soon enough explore the hegemonic power of capitalist rationalization, which some (Friedrich Pollack most notably) believed was leading toward a new order, state-capitalism. Others, including Herbert Marcuse, saw incipient "totalitarian" tendencies visible in liberal-capitalism as early as the late 1920s. Assessing the (earlier) legacy of liberal capitalism, Marcuse could write: "This rough sketch of liberalist social theory has shown how many elements of the totalitarian view of the state are already present in it."[94] Had conditions associated with the rise of fascism in Italy, Germany, and Spain already been theorized?

By the 1930s, others (Gramsci, Horkheimer, Adorno) had begun to detect the growing influence of the "culture industry" in the U.S., where the corporate media was on its ascendancy. None of these critics apparently saw the need to emphasize commodity fetishism, being more likely drawn to Weberian themes of capitalist rationalization and authoritarian state power. None, more significantly, were convinced that the proletarian revolution in the West was anything more than an outdated fantasy. With the onset of fascism, moreover, anti-system movements and parties across Europe were mostly crushed or simply vanished from the scene.

Among postwar texts that might be regarded as most closely approximating Lenin's turn-of-the-century pessimism regarding proletarian self-activity, Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man

surely deserves mention. (In contrast to Lukacs' Leninist exit strategy, however, Marcuse turned to "the great refusal" comprising a loose assemblage of "outsiders.") Turning to the growth of technological rationality in modern capitalism, Marcuse in 1964 could invoke the specter of a "totally-administered society" verging on "totalitarianism," where oppositional thinking becomes a grand illusion. Workers were now uniquely vulnerable to the corrosive effects of one-dimensionality, their likelihood of developing class solidarity now rapidly disappearing. This was Gramsci's concept of ideological hegemony on steroids. In Marcuse's words: "Technical progress, extended to the whole system of domination and coordination, creates forms of life (and of power) which appear to reconcile the forces opposing the system and to defeat or refute all protest in the name of historical prospects of freedom from toil and domination . . . This containment of social change is perhaps the most singular achievement of advanced industrial society."[95] He added: "Today, domination perpetuates and extends itself not only through technology but as technology, and the latter provides the great legitimation of the expanding political power, which absorbs all spheres of culture."[96] Could a more extreme view of ideological hegemony be found in Gramsci – or anyone else?

Marcuse's argument would seem to hold even more weight several decades later, with the rise of Silicon Valley, the oligopolistic high-tech sector, and surveillance society. While for years, it was fashionable to dwell on the growth of post-Fordism. Moreover, the widening repercussions of workplace rationalization (driven by the fast-food and retail sectors) were not to be overstated: crushing routinization of the labor process was rapidly expanding across low-wage sectors of the economy. In his classic The McDonaldization of Society, George Ritzer explored the systematic degradation of labor in American society, workers increasingly subjected to extremely repressive bureaucratic and technological controls. Labor techniques had become increasingly standardized, the workforce ever more homogeneous and interchangeable, jobs de-skilled in ways Taylor would have celebrated. The older variants of Fordism and Taylorism, severely ruinous to worker subjectivity, were being reintroduced beneath the façade of technological modernity. In Ritzer's words: "Fordism is alive and well in the modern world, although it has been transformed into McDonaldism. Furthermore, classic Fordism – for example, in the form of the assembly line – remains a significant presence in the American economy."[97] By the early twenty-first century, that supposedly outmoded presence had extended to nearly 25 percent of the workforce.

The waning of oppositional politics in the West cannot be fully grasped without reference to deepening trends associated with "mass society," increasingly visible after World War II. Such trends were first systematically explored by Frankfurt School critics, then further investigated during the 1950s by Mills in The Power Elite. For Mills, this phenomenon was organically connected to concentrated power at the summits of American society – in other words, the reverse side of capitalist rationalization. Mass society was becoming more homogeneous, conformist, and provincial behind a façade of "pluralism," "diversity," and democratic citizenship. Autonomous centers of opinion-formation had narrowed or disappeared, lost in the myriad forms of institutional and ideological control – a theme consistent with Marcuse's "one-dimensionality." As such, the system turned hostile toward expressions of class identity or class consciousness. As for "public opinion," it was now an assemblage of attitudes, beliefs, and myths routinely transmitted from the power elite to the general population. Viewed this way, public opinion had little validity of its own, being largely "realized within the prevailing institutions of power."[98] Nowhere was this more emphatically true than for postwar American society. How could class-based politics – indeed any anti-system opposition – possibly flourish in such a milieu?

For Mills, what might be described as "mass" or "public" had become associated with the system of domination Both individual or collective forms of subjectivity were negated to the extent "opinions become meaningless in the face of concentrated power."[99] Put differently: "In a mass society, the dominant type of communication is the formal media and the public becomes media markets."[100] The average person winds up atomized, separated, all too often submissive within the amorphous **mass**, thus incapable of democratic engagement. As elite power solidifies, it coexists with political impotence – hardly a recipe for proletarian self-

activity or radical opposition. Mills concluded: "The structural trends of modern society and the manipulative character of its communications technique come to the point of coincidence in the mass society."[101] The distance traversed here from classical Marxism to the new era of social atomization could not be more extensive. By the early twenty-first century, moreover, the widening terrain of technological rationality – visible across the Internet, social media, and mobile communications – would profoundly widen this distance.

Now approaching the third decade of the new century, the shrinking influence of Marxist classics seems no longer debatable. No revolutionary working-class politics exists anywhere, and prospects for any setting appear remote. Such failure is hardly fortuitous but is rather endemic to modern capitalist development. As for labor, in most Western societies, its role -- both structural and numerical – is far less central than earlier Marxists could have assumed. What might be understood nowadays as an industrial proletariat amounts to no more than 15 percent of the workforce in most countries? Class relations, as such has grown far more complex, variegated, and fragmented, subverting hopes for working-class cultural or political solidarity. On this point, Ron Aronson, in After Marxism, writes: "Capitalism has long since ceased to be constructed by the labor of an alienated and impoverished majority of workers with 'radical chains,' who could also claim to be a universal class."[102]

More challenging yet for Marxism is the failure to theorize ideological, political, and technological conditions that have transformed modern capitalism. A truncated view of capitalist rationalization stems in part from a different kind of commodity fetishism, fixed on a "market economy" that exists only as fiction kept alive by conservative propaganda. Although the commodity form remains and, in some ways, has broadened – visible in the form of consumer culture – its significance for "reification" (or hegemony) has weakened relative to other mechanisms of domination: state power, bureaucracy, technology, media culture. In the case of Saito, unfortunately, his Herculean efforts to resuscitate classical Marxism by endowing it with ecological cache are countered by failure to engage the dynamics of twenty-first-century capitalist rationalization.

By the 1960s, state-corporate globalization was producing new levels of environmental ruin, first documented by Rachel Carson. That was, not coincidentally, a time when ecological thought was gaining initial visibility, notable in the work of Carson, Barry Commoner, and Murray Bookchin. In the U.S., this breakthrough coincided with the rise of the new left, counterculture, and, by the 1970s, new social movements. At no point, however, did any ecological initiative converge with Marxist politics, while in Europe, those initiatives found a home in a few Green parties, just as both Socialist and Communist parties had become thoroughly deradicalized. Revisiting the familiar maxim that the natural world cannot be transformed without also transforming the human world, these new conditions meant that an ecological radicalism was desperately needed – years before climate change surfaced as a political imperative.

From Marx to Ecosocialism

It is now well more than a century since Marx and Engels last wrote anything for posterity. Much has changed across that expanse: capitalism still exists, in many ways stronger than ever, but has undergone transformations that nineteenth-century theorists could not have fully anticipated. Far removed from the era of classical political economy, capitalism has grown steadily more corporatized, more oligopolistic, more statist, more technological, more integrated, above all more **globalized**. (It is not enough to say that Marx and Engels were aware of such tendencies when, in fact, their work never systematically incorporated them.) While still beset with potentially explosive contradictions, the modern world system nonetheless appears integrated, less vulnerable to revolutionary challenge owing to its great integration, adaptability, and **scope**. Neither a more diversified and less proletarianized working class nor political forces once ideologically aligned with (a generally reformist) Marxism nowadays offer a viable threat

to elite power. The yawning gulf separating classical theory (liberal or Marxist) from modern capitalist reality is hardly to be blamed on the writers; they were, like other mortal intellectuals, working within certain historical parameters.

As the present ecological crisis worsens by the day, its reversal calls for a reckoning with global capitalism before it is too late to save planetary life as we know it. Climate change and related problems, resulting from ceaseless economic growth, urbanization, fossil-fuel driven warming, and resource wars bring humanity ever closer to imminent catastrophe. The current threat far transcends anything that might be associated with "metabolic rift." over the decades. The path to theoretical clarity and political strategy will now have to follow a different course than anything derived from the Marxist classics. It is one thing to argue for eliminating "private property" or "commodity production" in favor of a socialized economy, still, another to strategically confront the largest power structure ever known, one embedded in sprawling fortresses of corporate, state, and military interests. It is one thing to imagine a "proletarian revolution," yet another to forge a complex, shifting, multiclass bloc of oppositional forces capable of taking on world capitalism. It is one thing to anticipate a natural upsurge of "revolutionary consciousness" among workers, yet another to subvert expanding forms of ideological hegemony, bureaucratic hierarchy, and technological control precisely designed to block such consciousness. It is one thing to fantasize about an epochal "reunification" of humans and nature, yet another to begin transforming a globalized regime that spends trillions of dollars to protect its wealth and power while violently perpetuating its "domination of nature."

At this juncture, the old Marxist assumption of imputed revolutionary consciousness falls dramatically short of the new political challenges. In their provocative book Climate Leviathan, Geoff Mann and Joel Wainwright call for a radical departure from political normalcy, even as few mass counter-forces are presently visible. They write: "On political and existential grounds . . . the left needs a strategy – a political theory, one might say – for how to think about the future."[103] One problem is that ideological legacies inherited from the past appear exhausted: Communism, social democracy, liberalism, anarchism. As for liberalism, it now serves mainly as legitimating belief-system for capitalist power, while social democracy has never systematically (or radically) addressed the ecological challenge. Communism, such as it is, remains far too closely identified with extreme authoritarian power grown increasingly bureaucratic and conservative to be taken seriously as an alternative.

Turning to this predicament, Mann and Wainwright argue for what might be considered a (somewhat moderated) variant of Jacobinism – an outcome they believe even now inheres in what they call "planetary sovereignty," or "world government," a system with enough power to make binding, global, life-and-death decisions. They note that the world system is well along a path to Climate Leviathan, "because the further consolidation and expansion of extant power structures would seem to be the only structures of scale, scope, and authority even close to adequate to the challenge of climate change."[104] Precisely how this Leviathan might be taken to the next level, however, is never clearly indicated. The "planetary sovereignty" Mann and Wainwright have in mind would ideally intersect with an expansive green Keynesianism, or worldwide Green New Deal. Waiting patiently for **history** (or systemic contradictions) to eventually generate political solutions adequate to the threat facing humanity is futile, no more realistic than expectations of the proletarian revolution. If no radicalized mass constituency is likely to emerge through conventional electoral activity, what then? Could such a departure suggest it is time to revisit, in modified form, the creative Jacobinism of Lenin and Gramsci?

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The U.K. and 'Razor-Wire Humanitarianism': The Refugee Crisis and the Aesthetic of Violence

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Introduction

When the 'refugee crisis' in Calais became an issue of renewed concern in the summer of discontent in 2015, the United Kingdom's reticent stance towards the crisis was captured through its measured approach. A notable riposte from the then Home Secretary, Theresa May,[1] was to send in yet more 'security fencing' to fortify the borders in Calais to assuage the disaffection from both truckers and the public. Dubbing this the U.K.'s 'razor wire humanitarianism,' this article examines how the material artifact of the razor wire is implicated in the aesthetic of violence towards the refugee and migrant bodies. Designed as a biotechnology to cause injury and trauma (or ignite the pain of recall as a deterrent) and to equally enact a material boundary against bare life (collapsing distinctions between animal and human), this article utilizes razor wire as a lens to document the United Kingdom's treatment of the 'precarious refugee body.' Its sustained consignment to death and accidents invokes the border as a spectacular of necropolitics of the 'living dead.' The argument follows that these incursions with razor wire become performative sites for dehumanizing the 'migrant' body. However, in the process, it equally recasts this precarious body as a 'fleshed body,' imbued through its corporeality and resistance against the nexus of neoliberal politics of the razor wire designed for securitization and commercial flows of 'legitimate' bodies and goods. In the process, the razor wire becomes an active theatre for the spectacularization of pain, wounding, and human struggles in the border politics of exclusion in Fortress Europe.

Europe's 'refugee crisis', envisioned through the sprouting 'jungles' in Calais to the bodies and corpses shipwrecked on the Mediterranean islands, produced the refugee as a tragic and contentious figure in our contemporary moral consciousness. Fleeing from civil wars and persecution, leaving behind homelands and sacrificing their most precious possessions (i.e., their progeny) in their passage to seek more secure geographical terrains, the refugee is an inconvenient moral figure projecting a mirror onto the conscience of a beleaguered West. The West is pushed into global scrutiny through this 'refugee crisis,' enacting it as a battleground between morality and the neoliberal ideology of outsourcing solutions to this humanitarian crisis to other states.

The 'refugee crisis' in Europe as an ideological encounter between humanitarianism and the visceral politics of economic depletion is constantly played out through the rhetoric of morality and equally through a disavowal of responsibility towards these precarious bodies, while seemingly humanitarian in its token stances. The terms 'refugee' and 'migrant' became conflated in these discourses, casting a degree of suspicion on who is the 'real' refugee on the

one hand, while installing migration within an ambit of deviance and criminality on the other. The 'unruly' movement of migrants and asylum seekers have become a key source of anxiety as governments attempt to manage population movements in the circulatory and unpredictable context of globalization (Hodge 2015: 124). As such, the refugee and the immoral economic counterpart, the migrant, have become inconvenient entities in the politics of the nation-state, relentlessly testing the limits of morality and hospitality of the Enlightened West and unsettling it by shining a light onto the project of Western civilization.

There have been a plethora of studies on the refugee crisis in Europe, and this paper sustains these imperatives by appropriating a different lens of focusing on a material boundary (i.e. the border space) and its aesthetic in showcasing the sovereign power of the state and the (il)logical production of neo-liberal subjectivities and identities through its border control. As such, the material architectures which incarcerate the body or hold it captive or restrain it outside of a physical boundary are important, for they have an interface with the corporeal body which reveals its assumptions about the vulnerabilities of the human in conditions of precarity, whereby some lives are rendered more insecure, unequal, or destitute than others (Butler 2004).

Hence the material architecture which incarcerates or alienates a deviant body, whether this is the camp, the watching tower, the gas chamber, the wall, the quarantine island or zones of juridical indeterminacy, govern and discipline the body through an aesthetic of violence which can be performative and visual, imposing the cartography of power relations in these enactments. In imbricating the razor wire and the corporeal body into an aesthetic, the paper draws on Rancière's notion of "primal aesthetics" to draft maps of the trajectories between the visible and the sayable, relationships between modes of being, modes of saying, and modes of making and doing; where these draft maps illuminate how unspecified groups of people "adhere to a condition, react to situations, recognize their images" (Rancière 2006: 39). For Rancière, the space of the border as a social imaginary is to conceive space politically where it is a locus for identity and the examination of practices.

The discursive formations about refugees and the material practices of dealing with them in today's highly unstable global political environment (i.e., post-Brexit and in the Trump era) show that our mechanisms to control and dispel the Other have become cruder and blunter. The 'border wall' - the taller and more imposing boundary that will separate Mexico and the U.S. (the one which will be supposedly financed and built by the Global South or the lesser Other in the geopolitics of power to dispel its very own) reveal that the material architectures perform as symbolic, rhetorical and agentive devices while reconfiguring space through the disruptions in its interface with the migrant/refugee body.

Porous borders and fluid terrains representing economic and social solidarity amongst European nations (prior to Brexit) was presented as an ideal. Nevertheless, in reality, waves of expansion of the E.U. always produced anxious tremors within its body politic. The E.U. as part of the European imagination catered to a European sensibility of being mature enough to accommodate a diverse, cosmopolitan community. This ideal was naturally tested at different points in time. In the U.K., the opening up of the borders to Poland and Romania, for example, produced renewed internal anxieties of the country being invaded by Eastern Europeans who were going to take advantage of their welfare system and deplete the local populations morally and culturally (Light & Young 2009; Ibrahim & Howarth 2016) With a refugee crisis emerging in Europe and the sprouting of refugee camps or 'jungles' in Calais, one of the mechanisms to stop the influx of refugees to the country was enacted symbolically and materially through the fortification of the borders with razor wire. The continued fortification of the border and its sustained incursions produces a long-running relationship with the biotechnology of the razor wire and the vulnerable corporeal body. This material fortification conjoined with a reticent and half-hearted 'humanitarian' discourse of seeming to act in the best interest of the displaced further adds to the complex social imaginary of the razor wire as dispelling the unwanted.

This paper firstly examines the notion of 'razor wire humanitarianism' in the context of the biggest refugee crisis in the world. The history of barbed wire and razor wire is then explored

through a genealogy of its existence and its co-location with the flesh. The border is discussed as a space of 'the spectacular' in producing the theatre of bare life. The paper then goes on to consider the relationship between razor wire and the migrant/refugee body in the border spaces of Europe both in the co-production of corporeal vulnerabilities, formation of identities and subjectivities, and equally the resistance to this subjugation mooted through the body and flesh of the alien body.

The Humanitarian Crisis and 'Razor-Wire' Diplomacy

The developments in Calais need to be located within a wider context in which in 2014 the world was positioned as facing its biggest refugee and migration crisis since World War II (UNHCR 2015). This was due to the movement of millions of people (with children constituting almost half of this population) as a result of conflict or persecution and being stranded for years on the edge of society as the long-term internally displaced or refugees. Forced migration reached 65.3 million people worldwide in 2015, representing an increase of 10 percent from the previous year, with the United Nations predicting an upward trend in the coming years (UNHCR 2016). In 2015, an escalation in political conflict and religious persecution from Syria, Eritrea, and Somalia to Iraq and Afghanistan had led to over a million people (a four-fold increase from the previous year) crossing into Europe in search of sanctuary (UNHCR 2016). With the demise of the empire, decolonization and the formation of the European Union (E.U.) and the referendum to leave this union, migration and the provision of the political sanctuary remain an area of intense scrutiny in the U.K. and E.U. issues of immigration remain tightly welded to the politics of welfare, employment, British identity and sovereignty, and often these anxieties are framed as a means to regain control over its border space (Bosworth & Guild 2008; Darian-Smith 1999).

The provision of asylum, while a historical and romantic ideal, has been contracting over time with new policy enactments to curtail migration and asylum seekers since the Aliens Act in 1905 (Ibrahim & Howarth 2018; Bashford & McAdam 2014). In spite of Britain signing the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in 1954, almost four decades would pass before the bill was brought to parliament in 2000 (Schuster & Solomos 2001). This reveals the malleability with which the U.K. approaches migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers and the raft of stringent legislations since the 1990s to tightly regulate the borders. While development aid has enjoyed a more progressive reputation than emergency relief, the different waves of refugees entering Europe have been a testing ground for the British historical ideal of providing sanctuary. This so-called 'refugee crisis' in Calais and the Mediterranean became a theatre for this contracted humanitarianism.

Both Labour and Conservative governments have, over the years, equally engaged in appeasing a public highly critical of liberal immigration schemes. As such, restrictive immigration policy enactments, along with increased securitization of borders, biometric checks, and stringent visa rules have become tools to restrict the migrant and the refugee. These enactments over time also reflect a racialization of immigration policies, particularly who is admitted and who is not. 'Humanitarianism' has been viewed as a sort of moral theatre, and the state's ability to play a leading role has become tested and contested over the years while retaining the romantic ideal of the U.K. as a sanctuary for the persecuted. The demise of the empire, the ensuing events since World War II in absorbing the displaced, phases of immigration from the commonwealth and its colonies to fill Britain's industrial heartlands and government services, has meant that the internal political context has intimately shaped policy enactments in terms of immigration, particularly in the management and governance of labour. In view of this, the management of refugee populations at Calais and the Mediterranean is a delicate balancing act of retaining public support while assuaging the global stage of its moral obligations.

In September 2009, the demolition of refugee camps or the 'jungle' in Calais became a major news event for the British media as French authorities sought to regain spatial control over Calais

(see Sparks 2010). Despite the first demolition, new camps sprung up overnight to replace those destroyed. In 2015 the Calais crisis came back into media scrutiny due to bigger events in the Mediterranean, where unprecedented numbers of refugees were risking their lives in overcrowded and rickety boats to enter the E.U. Death tolls from shipwrecks in the Mediterranean began to rise as refugees fled conflict and persecution in North Africa. During the summer of discontent in 2015, French ferry workers went on strike and blocked freight access to the port between June and September, causing major disruptions to truckers and holidaymakers. The tragic image of the Syrian child Alan Kurdi on September 2, 2015, dead on the beach, ignited further interest in the Calais crisis. The E.U. had become a key destination for many from North Africa and the Middle East; however, the increased militarization of the Mediterranean and the Calais borders had also made it the 'most dangerous destination' for irregular migration in the world due to high mortality rates (IOM 2014). According to the estimates of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), more than 1 million migrants had reached Europe in 2015, many of whom did so by crossing the Mediterranean, and some 3,692 migrants died in their attempts to reach Europe, outstripping the number of deaths in 2014 by more than 400 (IOM 2014). Those that successfully negotiated the treacherous crossing made their way across Europe. By early 2016 an estimated 4000 were living in the squalid Jungle in Calais, and in February the southern part of the camp was demolished. By August, there were an estimated 9000 inhabitants. By late October the French authorities demolished the rest of the camp, having first evacuated thousands to detention centers or to heated container shelters on the edge of the camp (Allen 2016). However, within weeks newspapers were reporting that at least six 'secret camps' had sprouted up as hundreds of evicted refugees, including lone children with family in Britain absconded from reception centers scattered across France and returned to Calais in the hope of crossing the Channel (Bulman 2016).

As the E.U. faced one of its biggest humanitarian challenges, its response was fragmented and ad hoc, with some governments welcoming Syrian refugees but not those from Eritrea, Somalia, and Afghanistan. Others, for instance, the British and Hungarian governments, had prioritized the securing of their borders over the protection of the rights of migrants and refugees. The privileging of security in policy responses is a retreat from discourses of according protection and rights to refugees which emerged after World War II in international agreements on how civilians should be treated in war, particularly their right to seek sanctuary, claim asylum and avoid penalties for illegal entry in search of these. While the U.K. has identified Syrian refugees as 'real' refugees and had agreed to take in a symbolic figure of 20,000, the U.K. has required these refugees to be vetted by the U.N. and the Home Office in the U.N. camps around Syria as opposed to Europe. The double screening of refugees in the camps of Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey equally denotes the U.K.'s tougher stance to put out 'bogus asylum seekers' or those with potential links to terrorist groups. While the U.K. has pursued a hard line in the refugee crisis of advocating relief from a distance and in refusing to accept its quota of refugees, the government sought to protect its public image on the global stage by invoking its historic image of providing refuge to those fleeing persecution. Citing difficulties with vetting and differentiating the 'genuine' refugee from the illegal migrant and the potential terrorist amongst those already in the E.U., there has been a tendency to treat all under the 'suspect' category. In view of this, the U.K. has retained juxtaposed controls in Calais where it exercises 'full control' over who enters the U.K. (Cameron 2015).

The off-shoring of bordering practices to neighboring countries such as Libya is a central feature of the E.U.'s migration management (Vaughan-Williams 2010). Frontex, the E.U.'s external border management agency, has missions that extend far beyond the Mediterranean Sea into West Africa, and these increasingly resemble military operations (Picum 2010). The outsourcing of border practices not only represents a de facto transfer of governance from the E.U. to the states in North Africa and to the east, it also denotes an abrogation from responsibility for international protection of "irregular" migrants under international law (Bialasiewicz 2012). The absolving of responsibility by the E.U. and the systemic abuse of human rights have been

raised by NGOs and the United Nations (Vaughan-Williams 2010).

In terms of security of the Port of Calais and the Channel Tunnel, the U.K. has contributed £63m towards securing the Port and the Tunnel in 2015, including extra fencing and infrastructure, security guards, search dogs and detection technology. As of December 2016, the estimated costs to Britain of increased security were around £85 million (Press Association 2016). The expansion of the fencing remains part of the U.K.'s border fortification strategies. In effect, the U.K. government has extended the razor wire fences within the port of Calais. There has been a steady expansion in fencing and the creation of secure waiting areas installed by the British, the French and by the company that runs Eurotunnel. Augmentation of the fence is also seen to be providing the Port of Calais with a buffer zone or secure waiting area for 230 UK-bound lorries to 'wait safely' within the Port 'when queues occur' (May 2015b). Significantly, the U.K. erected a 'NATO fence,' a four-metre high concrete structure that runs along the main motorway to the Port of Calais completed in December 2016 at an estimated cost of £2.3 million.

Many studies observe that contemporary politics has become "saturated by security" with specific relevance to issues of forced migration, asylum seeker mobility, and detention (Neocleous, 2008:2; Fassin, 2012). Governments "shape, sculpt, mobilize and work through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs and wants" of individuals and groups. By doing so, they link issues of governing and politics to "the space of bodies, lives, selves and persons" (Dean 2010:20). This has provided fertile ground for thinking about the subjectivities foisted on the displaced and vulnerable populations such as refugees and migrants. The criminalization of migrants and asylum seekers and the ascribing of illegitimacy onto their bodies cultivate and maintain certain subjectivities in the name of securitization, and to justify clandestine practices and acts of degradation (Hodge 2015: 124).

The term 'razor wire humanitarianism' is employed to denote the composite stance of the U.K. government, where border fortification plays a symbolic role in convincing a hostile public in the U.K. of being tough towards the illegitimate Other while professing a moral role on the global stage. The combination of token humanitarianism, tough immigration to control the borders, along with the outsourcing of border practices, retains the border as a theatre for impressing its sovereign power while catering to the circulatory needs of capitalism. The acceptance of refugees from their countries of origin rather than within the E.U. ignites the border as a space of constant expiation and violence while reinforcing the material and symbolic value of the border fortified through razor wire.

Barbed and Razor Wire as Biotechnologies

Barbed wire and razor wire are types of steel wire used in forming barriers and fences, and have been used throughout modern history. These technologies are implicated in the enactment of the boundaries of property, prisons, and borders transcending and transgressing species, places, and times (Netz 2004:39). By targeting the flesh as a mechanism of control, it collapses the distinction between man and animal, reframing them as equally susceptible to pain and suffering. Barbed wire, as a biotechnology to inflict pain and socially condition human and animal behavior, reveals the "essential inhumanity of the industrial world" and "modern technology's destructive power" (Razac 2002:49). As tools in colonization and pacification of peoples in conquering new lands and territories, these stand for resistance against infiltration by the Other and containment of the Other. Barbed wire is affordable and easy to erect, in comparison to razor wire which is usually used to restrain cattle. Razor wire, on the other hand, is used for high-security fences.

Barbed wire has come to signify a particular architecture of violence and control while it is co-located with the piercing of the flesh, suffering, and recall to prompt withdrawal. Developed initially as an agricultural tool in the American West, barbed wire is intimately rooted in the "idea of relationship between flesh and iron" by socializing and manipulating animals through violence (Netz 2004:38). In examining the genealogy of the barbed wire, Netz (2004) firmly

entrenches violence, pain, and withdrawals as a means to prevent transgression and movement. By cutting through the boundary of our skins, it impacts the nerves, sending a message to the brain about pain, prompting a withdrawal. In an exhibition in San Antonia in 1876, dozens of fierce-looking longhorn bulls were packed into a plaza surrounded by barbed wire fences. These animals were deliberately frightened and provoked to charge at the fence but restrained reflexively from doing so due to their recall of pain inflicted by the sharp metal tearing their flesh. These wounded animals 'learned' from repeated attempts to instinctively withdraw and be restrained in that boundary. The spectacle as a symbolic act of submission and compliance revealed how the untamed could learn to respect the definition of a boundary and its limits while affirming the violent aesthetic of the barbed wire as a cheap, flexible and effective tool of surveillance and containment in controlling animals without human intervention (Netz 2004: 30–31). With particular relevance to the American West, this act of taming had a salience where cattle brought by the Spanish had become 'semi-feral,' and the barbed wires 'served to re-tame, by shock, an entire breed' (Netz 2004:38).

Barbed wire played a notable role in the colonization of the American West by providing control based on violence on a vast scale against animals and indigenous Americans alike (see Hayter 1939). The expansion of the railroad, as well as barbed wire enclosures, became critical to "the frontier advances and the retreat of American Indians" in the Western colonization of America as these modern industrial tools effectively "ended the American Indians existence as nations and their resistance to the white man" (Razac 2002:14). American Indians 'cursed' the barbed wire as "The Devil's Rope" as it closed off their traditional hunting grounds, hampered night raids on cattle, and "assisted in their pacification" (Krell 2002:38) through the brutal violence it wreaked on their bodies and their possessions. Not only was barbed wire a technology of colonization, but also it emerged with the gun, steamboat, and railway as critical tools in the emergence of capitalism. Netz (2004) argues that the critical 'discovery' that facilitated capitalism was that private ownership encouraged intensive investment and higher profits. The enclosure of fields first in Britain and then in America became the 'hallmark of capitalism' (Netz 2004:20). Barbed wire was a 'transformative' technology as it provided the symbolism of a fence to keep animals or people or out; it used force through the infliction of pain as an educative strategy to tame animals and people, and control their movement. Netz (2004:50) argues that the barbed wire and the urge to bring space under control symbolizes the age of capitalism. He sees the "true economic significance" of barbed wire in the capitalist concentrations of land, cattle, and industries.

The mass production of barbed wire and its effectiveness in controlling movement also meant it was ideally suited to warfare. The British army adapted barbed wire for military use to restrict the movement of Boer guerrilla units over vast expanses (Weiss 2011). Zionist settlers moving into territory formerly occupied by Palestinians relied on barbed wire to fence off these areas (Netz 2004:71). In the trenches of World War I, barbed wire became known as the "artificial bramble" (Razac 2002:40). Light and supple, it was immune to artillery fire and functioned as a formidable obstacle even when broken, making it economical yet effective (Rawling 2014). Deemed dangerous and terrifying by ordinary soldiers, it became entrenched within the mythology of the war, circulating as a recurrent and dominant trope in literary works of the war as an 'aesthetic' of the battlefield. Schmidt's With Rommel in the Desert visualizes torn bodies hanging on the barbed wire, left to die and rot, "calling attention to its ability to pierce and to fix, to hold the body in stasis: a memento mori in wire" (Krell 2002:48). This speaks about barbed wire's ultimate "capacity to turn a corpse into a spectacle … ripping clothes before the body is riddled by bullets" (Krell 2002:54).

The Nazi camps of World War II were surrounded with a double fence of electrified barbed wire thirteen feet high under constant surveillance from watchtowers which elongated their aesthetic of violence (Razac 2002). The centrality of the barbed wire fence in demarcating the camp meant that it was usually the first structure erected even before the construction of the camp. It not only marked the boundaries of the camp but was crucial in organizing space and

hierarchies within the camp. Gas chambers and crematoriums had separate barbed wire fences within the camps. Not only did it separate the camp from 'normal society,' it produced the bounded space as infinite (signifying both the empty time and space of captivity) as inmates never saw where the fence ended. It was equally useful in marking off spaces with special status while making arbitrary classifications visible (i.e., women from men, and certain nationalities were isolated, especially Soviet prisoners of war). In the Buchenwald camp, a cage made up of barbed wire dubbed the 'rose garden' constituted a space where the body would find its limits as prisoners could be left to die from hunger or exposed to severe temperatures (Razac 2002:60).

Olga Lengyel (1947:118), in her account of her experiences as a doctor in the camp, highlights the role of barbed wire in suicide and recounts how "each morning the workers found deformed bodies on the high-tension wires. This was how many chose to put an end to their torment". This form of suicide, popularly known as 'embracing the wire' in Auschwitz-Birkenau, symbolized both containment and liberation from captivity. As such, the barbed wire became a "graphic symbol of incarceration and political violence" and an "almost universal symbol of the camps and more generally of fascist and totalitarian violence" (Razac 2002:63-65). After the liberation of Auschwitz, Primo Levi asserted, 'liberty; the breach in the barbed wire gave us a concrete image of it' (cited in Silverstein 2015:86).

Razor wire remains a visceral material artifact, and its interrogation through artistic interventions today appropriates another means to query its brutality in enacting migration and refugee regimes against its spectacular imaginary of them as detritus entities. The European borders as impenetrable installations and as part of Fortress Europe prompted artist Dani Ploeger to cut off a piece of the razor wire Hungary had raised along its southern border with Serbia. A highly dangerous act, not least due to the criminal nature of the offense in Hungarian law, but equally in view of these being fortified with heat and movement sensors and capable of delivering an electric shock. Ploeger's artistic inventions seek to highlight the use of 'smart' technologies used to obscure their immediate violence and as such "their framing as supposedly clean and precise technologies is symptomatic of a broader cultural practice that uses narratives of technologization to justify means of violence".[2] Exhibiting that piece of fence at the Bruthaus Gallery in Belgium, it sought to invoke the moral depravity of delegating our "responsibility towards asylum-seekers to these tech-enhanced structures."[3]

The Border Spectacular and the 'Living Dead'

Borders function not only in order to exclude some and include others but primarily to effect a specific stabilized circulation of desired social and economic effects: profit, property, racial division, etc. (Nail 2012:242). The border, in assuming central importance in the functioning of the neoliberal state, brings economic order through the accumulation of domestic markets in goods and labor (Stratton 2009). In enabling the selected influx of bodies as labor while expiating the illegitimate Other, the border sits within a disjuncture of these circulatory flows. On the one hand, it embodies a post-Westphalian transmutation where territorial forms of sovereignty are eroding, but on the other, it is increasingly enacted through securitization and anti-immigration initiatives that produce new racialized groups to fear (Hodge 2015:12-125). Borders are about the "performance of sovereignty" (Jones 2009) and about the "biopolitics of submission," where everyone is reduced to bare life as they submit to the authority of the state (Salter 2008). The binary logic of inside/outside associated with geopolitical imagination produces a continuum of violence, particularly in the case of the E.U. with its sustained spatial displacements and temporal deferrals (Hodge 2015:124).

As such, the violence of the border is now more than ever directed against a highly malleable and unspecified enemy: migratory life in general (Nail 2012:242). Within this 'governmentality' of ordering bodies and creating new categories through political governance of the state, public enactments of torture disappear and are unveiled in the fringes of state power (Foucault 2003).

The management, representation, and the actual infliction of death have long been considered the cornerstone of state sovereignty (Magaña 2011). Foucault's (2003) biopower then encapsulates both the regulatory power of the state and equally its nodes of disciplinary power. For Foucault (2003:241), sovereign power rests not just in taking life or letting live, but in "making live" and "letting die."

The border imbibing its neo-liberal agenda and sovereign power becomes a creative instrument for ordering bodies by stripping them to 'bare life' (Agamben 1998) or impressing the corporeal vulnerability of human life (Butler 2004), and in exhibiting 'mere life' (Benjamin 2004) where it is "vulnerable to injury by his fellow men." Where Agamben (1998) homogenizes "bare life" in the spaces of exception, others point out that the production of subjectivity is much more fractured and unstable (Butler 2004; Isin & Rygiel 2007). Borders reposition the human, not into a binary of human or non-human but through a "clarification of what form of life or living constitutes belonging and what constitutes non-belonging" (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr 2007:xii). Isin and Rygiel (2007:182 - 183), by focusing on the abject body propound that people are neither treated as subjects (of discipline) nor objects (of elimination) but are considered "inexistent beings" by rendering them invisible and inaudible. Judith Butler critiques the notion of 'bare life' for its uniform conception of this life form and asserts that "the construction of the human is a differential operation that produces the more and the less 'human,' the inhuman, the humanly unthinkable. These excluded sites come to bound the 'human' as its constitutive outside, and to haunt those boundaries as the persistent possibility of their disruption and re-articulation" (Butler 1993:8).

For Achille Mbembe (2003:186), certain sites perfect lethal or oppressive biopolitical or necropolitical technologies exercised on marginalised bodies, hence placing emphasis on the management of death as a form of biopower. Mbembe (2003) constructs bare life as not a single production of biopower but through a combination of biopolitics, necropolitics, and necropower. These then account for the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creation of death-worlds; new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of 'living dead' (Mbembe 2003:40). The 'living dead' in the Nazi concentration camps is something which Agamben (1999) portrays through the crouched figure of the 'Muselmann' where this figure is beyond trauma, morality, human dignity, or religion. These camp inmates "were reduced to 'living corpses,' 'nameless hulks'; beings who were presumably human but seemed to lack any dignity, spontaneity, or humanity" (Bernstein 2002). The Muselmann is an indefinite being and a liminal figure between human and non-human, representing a "limit experience" where our normative "ethical, political, medical, and biological concepts and categories break down" (Bernstein 2002).

Giorgio Agamben's (1998:2005) 'state of exception' is integrated within the architectures of violence such as the camps, incarceration sites (e.g., Guantanamo Bay), military installations and border zones. The border spaces and sites of incarceration require a material architecture and aesthetic which reproduce and reorder space. The border space is made for performance where the worthlessness of the alien body can be reasserted and re-inscribed through the presence of a material architecture and its materiality. As such, violence warrants a performative theatre in which the body can be made or produced as 'bare life' and paraded through its liminality and vulnerabilities. This visual theatre is part of the biopolitics of the border, where life is re-coded and re-ordered through its own sensibilities, and where laws can be both suspended and applied without impunity.

The razor wire is part of this architecture of surveillance and violence on the corporeal body in border spaces. These demarcate protected zones where bodies can be retained or kept out of the boundary or governed through a different set of rules. The watching tower envisaged by Jeremy Bentham within his Victorian utilitarianism perspective as part of his vision of social reform of the prison system was conceived by Foucault as a material architecture of violence. Foucault's scrutiny of Bentham's Panopticon as part of a surveillance machinery conjoined it to

wider processes of modern governance. Symbolically, the notion of an unbroken gaze produced a mechanism for disciplining the body, inscribing the watching tower as an important symbolic architecture of sociological inquiry. Here the material tower provided a means to re-configure the relationship with the gaze, the body, and social conditioning as well as disciplining of the body and the senses through the aesthetics of internal (i.e. the corporeal body and its senses) and external (i.e., environment) control.

While the watching tower within the theoretical frameworks of the Panopticon has received expansive attention, barbed wire or razor wire provides a locus in reconfiguring border spaces and their relationship with the corporeal body. Stepping away from looking at death as an agentive resource, Rocío Magaña (2011) proposes the idea that in death the body bears the possibility to re-signify social, political, and spatial relations. Magaña (2011), in assessing the border patrol in the Arizona–Sonora border region, narrates the border as a disruptive space outmanned and outgunned by the various cartels that operate across its territory, where the state does not hold a sovereign monopoly on life, death or violence. While not all deaths are equal, they remain at the center of the state's border activity performing to a triangulation of, among transgressed territoriality, dead bodies, and state politics. The inability to completely control the border means corpses are mobilized to perform the authority of the state and social cohesion. Hence the border is bound with a necropolitics, whereby the corpses become the sites on which social, political, and spatial battles are fought. The body becomes a symbolic stage on which the desirable or acceptable can be conveyed, making the dead body socio-politically productive. Magaña (2011) articulates this as a form of political 'afterlife' where the production of authority and citizen protection pivots on the effective management and recasting of politically charged dead bodies. Such appropriation enables the transformation of uncertainty brought about by border violence and neglect and turns the deaths they produce into a political resource. This, as such, transforms Agamben's (1998) biopolitics of 'bare life' into thanatopolitics where death and the damaged body mobilizes political life. Agamben's (1998) 'bare life' invites critique on its limitations in extrapolating the emotive from something deemed 'exceptional.' With his focus on the judicial primacy of the sovereign, he neglects the affective in the production of life (Salter & Mutlu 2011).

Barbed wire and razor wire as border installations acquire a relationship with the migrant/refugee body and impose an aesthetic of violence in disciplining and dispelling them. Instead of the politics of 'afterlife' of Magaña's (2011) Mexican border, the wires forge a sustained relationship with the 'living dead,' where their incursions against this biotechnology codes them through deviance and criminality and as entities who need to be protected against their own acts of desperation. Razor wire, as a technology designed to target the flesh and draw on its trauma and suffering, is part of the architecture of violence. It provides a crucial visuality and material theatre in denigrating illegal bodies and parading the border as a nexus between neoliberal politics and sovereign violence against the Other. Today razor wire has become a symbol of refugee struggle and encodes this through the spectacular of this biotechnology. The 'spectacular' claims a co-location with the unspeakable where its aesthetic can coalesce into the political realm and equally transcend it (Rancière 2006). This constant negotiation of the 'bare life and 'after life' define the material and symbolic politics of the razor wire. The sustained non-resolution of the refugee crisis creates the flesh of the refugee body as a vehicle for the foreboding politics of the border and equally as a quest for renewed resistance and resilience of the alien body. As such the fenced razor wire installations provide a crucial visuality and material theatre in the politics of the living dead and camps which multiply even as they are shut down. The deaths and damaged bodies on the margins of the Calais camp and fortified fences speak about a necropolitics where the living dead cannot be conditioned through the biotechnology of the razor wire or the pain these inflict, their damaged bodies remain an inconvenience that needs to be remedied with more 'smart' technologies embedded onto the razor wire while the humanitarian crisis is outsourced and dealt with at a distance by the state.

The Razor Wire in Europe

The refugee or the migrant body is viewed through how it is always given over to others, to norms, to social and political organizations that have developed historically in order to maximize precariousness for some and minimized precariousness for others. Hence they "organize visual experience" and generate "specific ontologies of the subject" (Butler 2009: 2–3). The constitution and reiteration of the subject are produced and shift according to the life norms in which subjects are recognized and are made recognizable. As such, the refugee/migrant body is depicted through the biotechnology of the razor wire where their bodies are pledged to the violence of the border and equally imagined through the overarching frames of securitization or through their intrusions as the 'Other' recode them through the materiality of the border. The material architecture of the border denies it corporeality, or their fragile and vulnerable experience as embodied while producing the border as a space of disruption and the authorities' renewed attempts to impose order. But within this articulation, the embodiment and corporeality as well as the performativity and vulnerability of these displaced bodies are endlessly enacted as a theatre of human suffering, remaking them as humans against Fortress Europe. Razor wire was "the symbol of the refugee crisis" (Asche 2015) particularly with the Syrian crisis providing a recurring visual and material prop as refugees, both adults and children, walk along rail tracks against barbed wire on the 175 kilometers-long wall at the Hungarian-Serbian border. A track of human ordeal invoked through the fear of police detection and the constant incursions of the precarious human body against the wire fence where their 'humanness' is performed through cuts and injuries (U.N. News Centre 2015), being electrocuted or in taking risks in dangling children over it (Reynolds et al. 2015). The corporeality of these precarious bodies is ironically re-articulated through the violence of the razor wire, despite inscribing death and injury as part of their predicament in the quest to end their statelessness.

The razor wire as a material architecture with a capacity for violence is constantly infused through securitization discourses in political references as 'security fences' or instruments to fortify and control the border as well as to protect the legitimate movement of bodies and goods. Its aesthetic and material prominence in such a schema within the neoliberal is reiterated through initiatives to reinforce the fence periodically from incursions (Stevens 2015). These incursions are co-located through the refugee body as a dangerous entity attempting to board moving trains or disrupt train platforms (May 2015c), lending to the framing of the refugees as threats and risks to the vitality of the economy, its security, as well as to its populations. The fence then acquires an intrinsic virtue of preventing illegitimate activities and irresponsible loss of life and to ensure that the public is not subjected to long delays by illegal bodies and stowaways (May 2015a), and providing a frontline against illegal migrants in Calais in the process (May 2011).

The aesthetic of the violence of the razor wire constructed through military metaphors in guarding Fortress Europe coheres in descriptions to it as the 'Great Wall of Calais,' referring to the four-meter high concrete structure present along the main motorway to the Calais port completed in December 2016 (Press Association 2016) or the "new iron curtain" (Asche 2015). The visual turn during summer 2015 captured more graphically than before the brutality of securitization, migrant-police engagements and the desperation of the migrants to sneak aboard passing vehicles (See Ibrahim & Howarth 2016). These confrontations with the alien bodies were corroborated by media reports of heavily outnumbered police being forced to use water cannons, baton charges, and tear gas to repel migrants seeking to board passing vehicles and the reinforcement of perimeter fencing with razor wire (Chrisafis 2015). The brutal rituals of crossing the fence became an intrinsic element of this human theatre of migration. Getting to the other side of the fence as a form of daily struggle ingrained the razor wire into the psyche and the affective states of the inhabitants of Calais. Life on the other side is imagined and impeded through the razor wire encapsulating the biotechnology as a fence that fosters both depressive states in the camp and renewed agency to overcome this barrier in the dark of the night when detection of transgressive bodies might be more difficult by authorities.

The renewed fortifications of the razor wire fence against the constant demolitions of the camps in Calais and the recurrent sprouting up of new jungles from 2009 to 2015 constantly reproduce the site of the 'jungle' as amenable to obliteration and the migrant body as given over to constant dispersal, eradication, and obliteration against the steel structure of the fence. In the process, the migrant floating body and its impermanence ironically forms a binding material and symbolic relationship with the very fence it has to surmount. The jungle as an ephemeral holding site against the hard fence, that very object the migrant body has to cross to shed its 'stateless' existence immerses the migrant body into a long battle with the fence; to cross the border either as a stowaway on the trucks bound for the U.K. or in negotiating the treacherous fence waiting to cut and wound them. Through such a predicament, the inhabitants of the Calais camp form a long-running relationship with the razor wire, where they rest through the day and conserve their energies to cross it at night (Charlton 2015), forging a psychology of resistance through the material boundary of the razor wire. Their incursions with the wire, including their cuts and bruises or, in a worst-case scenario, gangrene, reaffirm the corporeality of the displaced and equally their agency against the biotechnology of the razor wire and its aesthetics of containment and violence. The depictions of violence in Calais are both embodied and spatially arranged through the politics of the border. Violence appropriates a duality: there is violence inflicted on refugees' bodies by their incarceration in the camps or detention centers and there is the violence of the sovereign state in the liminal state of exception in Calais. This duality means that the displaced equally exercise power over their own bodies through the risk they take to cross the border. In tandem, the sovereign power wields bio-political power on these contaminants who weaken the security of their borders.

Joseph Pugliese (2002) argues that the spatio-temporal logic of the camp induces 'refugees to fall back on the one resource left to them in the midst of the violence of indefinite incarceration: their bodies'. If the augmentation and fortification initiatives of the border fence construct the 'migrants' with a feral quality and animality, where they constantly pose a danger to security and the flow of goods, the embodied experiences of refugees are realized through NGOs and charities aiding these vulnerable populations in Calais who view the razor wire as 'despicable' and causing life-threatening injuries, infection and gangrene (Asche 2015). The animal and feral metaphors used in official discourses are countered through the 'fleshed body' of the displaced by NGO encounters (Ibrahim & Howarth 2016c). Wounds and gashes from negotiating the fences, chunks of flesh being gouged by metal spikes, broken limbs from falling off trains and lorries, to acute infections from the metal wires (Daynes 2015; Davies & Isakjee2015) ironically restore the humanity of these wounded bodies and their quest to regain agency against their seemingly futile predicament and invisibility in their attempts to claim asylum.

While these encounters reiterate these bodies as "vulnerable to injury and suffering" (Butler 2011:577) through their daily struggles to get to the other side, they renew the embodied nature of their struggle. Butler (2012:11) proposes that the precarity of the 'ungrievable' as bio-politically regulated and, as such, actively produced, maintained, and reiterated in this neoliberal assemblage and politics of migration in Europe. The symbolic and material theatre of the security fence is a space where the alien "bodies appear to other bodies", where they enact the politics of the living dead – not grievable or recognizable as human. Their tangible materiality is also a canvas for sustained articulations of human suffering and enactment of agency against the containment of bare life in Fortress Europe (Lundborg & Vaughan-Williams 2011) . Their corporeal bodies enmeshed with the brutality of razor wire (defying the recall of pain as a reaction to the metal fence) reassert them as fleshed entities renewing the theatre of struggle through their bodies. In the process, as Magaña (2011) observes, they disrupt the spatial arrangement of power at the border, thrusting these transgressive bodies as the symbolic and ideological site of struggle against a hard-line Europe.

Conclusion

The 'refugee crisis' in Calais and the increased efforts to secure the border against the transgressions of the 'unwanted' illuminates razor wire as a material and symbolic artifact intimately bound with capitalism, neoliberal ideology, securitization, immigration policies and techniques of exclusion and containment. Razor wire captured the vulnerable as wounded against the brutal politics of the border in which bodies appear and become visible to authorities – hence both the fence and these bodies have to be constantly managed. The razor wire fence needs to be fortified over time to enable the legitimate entry of goods and bodies while thrusting out the detritus. The razor wire fence as a symbol emerging through political discourse and media imagery acquired prominence in this humanitarian crisis. In being deconstructed as a material artifact against the border politics of Fortress Europe, razor wire performs to a theatre of human struggle of bare life against the sovereign state. The genealogy of razor wire through the biopolitics of the unwanted refugee body reveals an ongoing relationship between pain, trauma, exclusion, and the production of bare life at the border. The constitution of the living dead through their corporeal vulnerability in the spatial logic of the security fence recodes the migrant/refugee body as agentic through its incursions against the neoliberal nation-state, rendering it through its non-human qualities while disrupting its spatial arrangement of power at the border. The biopolitics of the fence in collapsing the distinction between animal and human, reframes the refugee/migrant bodies as criminal and deviant entities who are never completely tamed by the fence as living corpses, as they recur through time as desperate bodies presenting a danger to themselves and those they invade. As such, the securitization of the fence becomes a project that is both futile yet necessary to perform the migrant/refugee body - and a theatre to enact them as ungrievable and dispensable entities not amenable to containment. Against this, the human is fleshed through their daily resistance and suffering, recomposing them both through the visceral politics of immigration in Fortress Europe and the resilience of the human spirit conjoining these disparate strands intimately with the razor wire and its hunger for the human flesh. This razor wire humanitarianism imagined through the security fence infers disrupted spatial relations in which the resilient wounded body unsettles the security of the boundary, its management of the 'migrant/refugee' and its imagined humanitarianism.

Endnotes

1. Theresa May was the Prime Minister in the UK from July 2016 till July 2019

2. See 'Cutting through the 'smart' walls and fences of Fortress Europe', https://we-make-money-not-art.com/cutting-through-the-smart-walls-and-fences-of-fortress-europe/

3.Ibid.

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The Politics of Curiosity

Eva-Maria Swidler

Introduction

Coming home a few months ago from yet another frustrating day of teaching, I had a sudden epiphany that crystallized my swirling emotions: curiosity is political. The absence, presence, cultivation, and extirpation of curiosity are all political tools to be wielded, yielding almost unimaginable power. Curiosity is also an outcome, a social construction, that has ubiquitous political consequences.

Although psychologists agree that curiosity is a drive that emerges from some internal (or intrinsic, in the terms they favor) place, it is also well-known that curiosity can be reduced, shaped, altered, or eliminated by surroundings. The politics of curiosity are exactly located in the question of which aspects of curiosity are internal and which are external and in the tensions and tug of war between those locations, and in the morality of our inevitable participation and intervention in those dynamics. What kinds of curiosity might be said to be "natural"? Should those natural curiosities be suppressed, allowed, or encouraged to flourish? What kinds of curiosity are socially created? What social forces, dastardly or ethical, are brought to bear on curiosity, how do they work, and what are their results? What should we do about those forces? What are the social and individual consequences of different kinds of curiosity, and therefore what is our responsibility regarding the cultivation or extirpation of those curiosities? The list of essential questions goes on almost infinitely.

As a society, our most common conversations about curiosity seem to treat it as an entirely intrinsic trait without a social side; we shake our heads at curiosity's absence and attribute a lack of it to a personal character flaw. But as John Dewey observed, "Curiosity is not an accidental isolated possession," whether virtuous or sinful.[1] It seems important, therefore, to open this essay by arguing against this understanding of curiosity as an individual responsibility and to show instead that the contemporary social dynamics that militate against curiosity are many.

Curiosity is a self-initiated urge that is, by definition, satisfied by an individual's own observations and own actions and deemed satisfied by a person's own judgment, like an itch needing to be scratched. Curiosity cannot be commanded and disappears under the coercion that is the condition common to contemporary workers and students alike. As an internal condition, curiosity is specifically not oriented towards, nor encouraged by, extrinsic rewards such as status, grades, or recognition. In fact, as a guileless and self-exposing phenomenon, it most often withers when exposed to the glare of measurement, judgment, and comparison. Yet these metrics and dynamics are now considered the gold standard of the workplace, education, and increasingly society in general.

Curiosity also suffers as a "knowledge emotion" or mood state that evaporates not just under the particular scrutiny of being evaluated, but in situations of generalized insecurity and anxiety. Anxiety is the mental condition that the Institute for Precarious Studies has very plausibly

asserted as the zeitgeist of the last (neoliberal) forty years.[2] To be curious requires a comfort with not-knowing, with uncertainty, and with ambiguity, and therefore requires a deep security in the sense of self, a center of gravity that keeps us grounded while being open to questioning our knowledge. The sense of security and self-possession that curiosity is built on is surely not cultivated by our times.

Finally, although an intimate experience, the emotional aspects of curiosity, as with so many other phenomena of political import today, have been ignored to the detriment of understanding. Perhaps the emotional facet of reality has been sullied for some by an association with mid-20th century psychoanalysis and Freudianism; in many radical circles, it is received as superficial and almost petty to talk about the emotional. Thinking of an experience as an emotion locates it in the belittled, disparaged part of the Cartesian binaries that rule intellectual life and common cultural sense: female/personal/frivolous versus male/public/consequential. Calling a phenomenon psychological rather than emotional might be one way to frame it as worthy of scientific investigation. But we must deal with emotion as such if we are to deal with people. Emotions **are** intimate and yet they are connected to the rest of the world, and the same goes for curiosity.

Curiosity is fundamentally built on self-possession, security, and intellectual openness because it is built on a potential willingness to engage and accept the unknown. We, on the other hand, live in an unstable global moment of intense competition and maximizing social and economic hierarchy, in which populations flounder in a resulting stew of fear, anger, anxiety, alienation, and even shame. In short, the economically and socially polarized, competitive, precarious, defensive, surveilled, judged, aggressive cultural bath we swim in makes a healthy curiosity almost impossible. And in fact, we all know intuitively, with just a moment's reflection, that defensive people, aggressive people, or despairing people are only curious *despite* themselves. It is obvious that our moment's zeitgeist is not conducive to curiosity.[3] And all the while that curiosity is being displaced by free-floating cultural anxiety, the scales are even further tilted as curiosity is being actively squelched as a threat by those in power and actively suppressed in the self as a form of self-defense by those under cultural attack.

But simultaneously, curiosity about other places, other people, other minds, other beings, is necessary for our moral health and for our imagination of an alternate, better future, a hope for what might be. We find ourselves in a classic catch-22: to build and maintain alternative politics, communities, and social worlds we need to pursue a deep curiosity about other people, other beings, and other ways of living, but in order to make room for this curiosity in our society, we need to make fundamental social changes that allow people the conditions for an unencumbered, healthy curiosity.

Although curiosity has been long neglected as a topic of study, it behooves students of capitalism to examine it, to see why it thrives and why it withers, to imagine why curiosity might be withheld as a means of resisting exploitation and subjugation, and to ponder how a moral curiosity might be protected and nurtured.

Recognizing curiosity as necessary for creating new solidarities and political movements, this exploratory essay specifically considers the social and political roots as well as consequences of both curiosity and *in*curiosity, apathy, and ignorance, including such topics as willful apathy as cultural resistance and self-defense, ignorance as an ethical choice, incuriosity as arrogance, and socially generalized anxiety and the shrinking of curiosity.

The State of Curiosity Studies

Curiosity, simultaneously an intellectual and an emotional phenomenon, is surprisingly unstudied, even while it is pivotal for not only activists but also cultural critics and educators to understand. Most citations on curiosity are to be found in the fields of psychology (and its more scientifically garbed allies such as neuroscience) and education, with a healthy presence in

the world of business; philosophy has a few entries as well.[4] That teachers are concerned with curiosity is not surprising; although an excited curiosity is disruptive to the classroom and often squelched, without any curiosity at all, teachers face an almost insurmountable climb towards engaging students. That the business world is concerned with curiosity might be a bit more surprising at first glance. As frequent purveyors of a mythology of the worth of restless ingenuity and entrepreneurial inquisitiveness, the corporate attraction to the topic might make sense, but more important, perhaps, is that the world of capital is confronting what Guillaume Paoli called a "falling rate of motivation" and is looking to curiosity as a means of boosting it.[5]

In cultural studies, history, and the social sciences of anthropology, sociology, and political science there is little to no literature on curiosity to be found. This absence seems deeply problematic. Students of society hold unquestioningly that social structures and cultures, and our particular positions in those systems, frame and shape our thought patterns. But how do our everyday surroundings get translated into our internal worldviews and understandings? Analyses of cultural hegemony, dominant paradigms, master narratives, public discourses—all these are necessary and important. But too often they exist in a conceptual layer floating atop the level of individual people, connected to real humans only by a black box. For instance, just how is it that girls grow up scared of math? We might talk in sociology about the process of socialization--what words are said or avoided or what smiles are given or withheld--but how do those messages hit home? What do they make girls feel, and how does that new internal reality, whether mental or emotional, then perpetuate the messages? Unless we think of humans as mirrors rather than beings, or subscribe to the most primitive behaviorist or Pavlovian models in which people acquire automatic physical reactions to stimuli, we need to imagine how the inner lives of people—their understandings, fears, visions--are inscribed by social forces to produce patterned results.

As an emotion, curiosity (and the lack of it) would seem to be a key vehicle to examine, one necessary step in tracing just how society makes its way into our minds and becomes part of our intimate, individual self. Curiosities filter and direct our experiences, memories, and attention. In the most concrete and practical sense, how *is* it, for instance, that we can grow up in a world composed in the majority of women and yet know so little about their lives? Because we are not paying attention. We are not *curious* about them. The way in which sexism has been admitted to our mind is via the emotions of incuriosity and boredom. And on the other hand, what do we need if we want to bring issues into the public concern? We need public **curiosity** about them. The social sciences need to reckon with curiosity.[6]

It has been clear to the left for a long time that the contours of knowledge are politically drawn: who knows what, how they come to know it, why they care to know it, how well they know it, from what point of view they know it, are all acknowledged to be realities created by social formations and social position.[7] Already in 1934, Upton Sinclair remarked that "(i)t is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it," making a direct case for what we would now call a standpoint theory of ignorance.[8] In recent years an increased interest in the politics of ignorance, as well as knowledge, has begun to take shape; agnotology, as the philosophical study of ignorance is named, builds connections among politics, psychology, and public memory to describe a process of the social construction of ignorance that mirrors the social construction of knowledge.[9] What people *don't* know, why they don't know it, and why they (in some instances, at least) don't care to know it can now be pursued as areas of active inquiry. In other words, we recognize that ignorance is often not a result of a simple lack of information, but is instead a state that is actively created and defended. Although the newly coined term of agnotology is still unfamiliar (and perhaps trendy) in academic circles, we should pause here to observe that Sinclair's quote shows us that the basic insight that the field is based on, (that ignorance can serve power), is actually a long-standing and frequent observation of the powerless.

Unfortunately, neither epistemology nor agnotology has engaged significantly with the idea of curiosity, which is, after all, a conduit of knowledge creation, the means by which the mind is engaged both to know and to ignore, the mechanism (although a mechanistic word is

uncomfortable) by which society's messages might make their way into our inner landscape. Curiosity as a concept and a phenomenon appears to be almost entirely ignored by the liberal arts. Only in a culture with such a gaping hole could it be possible to have an "epiphany" of what **should** be the entirely obvious insight that curiosity is political.

What is Curiosity and Why Should We Care?

Curiosity is something of a catch-all term in English; despite its almost universally positive modern connotations in our part of the world, at least among the higher classes, it is clearly not necessarily or automatically an unmitigated good. Curiosity can also describe phenomena that occupy the more neutral ground of mere diversion or distraction--what we often term idle or aimless curiosity--or perhaps of weakness or indulgence, as it was more commonly held to be in the American and European past: "curiosity killed the cat." An active refusal of certain curiosities can be a moral choice, as in a lack of curiosity about how to create a neutron bomb or how to best torture people. Refusing to be curious can be a choice of respect, maintaining privacy or dignity by looking aside, either literally or metaphorically. Curiosity itself can represent a thirst for power. Think of the unslakeable thirst sort of curiosity of nineteenth-century imperialists and Victorian memento seekers, seeking knowledge as a form of control, or of the greedy, entrepreneurial curiosity of prospectors of every sort. Thorstein Veblen called this kind of curiosity "pecuniary curiosity," and it has been recently labeled "neoliberal curiosity" in its contemporary incarnation.[10]

However, curiosity of a certain kind is also considered to be a necessary foundation of morality. Carl Goldberg proposes that conscience cannot function without curiosity. Pointing out that curiosity requires the capacity to suspend judgment, the subjection of your own knowledge and beliefs to doubt, and a willingness to ask questions, Goldberg argues that the conscience also requires the suspension of certainty in order to answer the question "What is right?" For Goldberg, this moral question is one that cannot be answered without curiosity's essential elements of inquiry and reflection, in direct opposition to dogmatic thinking.[11]

Perhaps we can characterize a desirable curiosity, a moral curiosity, as a curiosity based not on accruing power nor on diversion, but on respect for whatever or whomever one is curious about. Curiosity as a personal trait is a significant predictor of so-called emotional intelligence, or a grasp of and respect for other minds.[12] Cynthia Enloe, writing *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire*, characterizes taking women and their lives seriously as "having curiosity" about women. This kind of respectful curiosity engages with other realities and other existences as valuable on their own terms, not as instruments for us.

Curiosity has a moral dimension that is not only personal but social, as well. Without a desire to know about the world, we will never want to change it, nor know how to begin that project. Without a desire to know about other ways of being, we will never build community, solidarity, or a new reality. While support for active incuriosity and ignorance has important moral standing in some contexts, as we'll see below, as teachers, activists, or concerned citizens we must also advocate for the political and moral value of certain kinds of curiosity, curiosity which, in the words of Foucault, "evokes the care one takes of what exists and what might exist."[13] Progressive educator William Heard Kilpatrick described morality as being ready, willing, and able to assess and take responsibility for the consequences of your behavior.[14] We can see, therefore, that curiosity in a deep sense, the sense of alertness and attention to care for the surrounding world, is necessary to make moral choices.

Curiosity and the School

The molding of curiosity begins at birth. While there are precious few characteristics innate in humans, curiosity is one of them. Yet it was quickly obvious to me years ago as a new mother

that as children grow up in our society, they progressively lose curiosity, yielding a remarkably incurious adult population. While the more individual and particular forces of family dynamics and parental styles obviously shape curiosity, for most children the institutional impacts of daycare and school are behind a transformation from sparkling and delighted four-year-olds into dull and sullen children only a few years later, causing many parents to wonder whether the fairies have stolen their child.

The flattening of free-ranging curiosity in schools has been the subject of complaint for centuries. William Blake's 1789 poem "The School Boy" continues to describe the reality of children today.

> "But to go to school in a summer morn,-
> O it drives all joy away!
> Under a cruel eye outworn,
> The little ones spend the day
> In sighing and dismay.
>
> Ah then at times I drooping sit,
> And spend many an anxious hour;
> Nor in my book can I take delight,
> Nor sit in learning's bower,
> Worn through with dreary shower.

Our culture seems schizophrenic about children and curiosity. While trumpeting the value of curiosity for pupils and adults alike, (lists of how to improve and cultivate your curiosity abound online), actually curious children, those who remain entranced with their work when the class bell rings or who can't stop looking out the window during class, are punished.

But kindergarten and the lower elementary grades did use to be relatively free form in spirit and design, leaving learning by rote and a strong concern for standards to the later years, and sociologists and psychologists pegged somewhere around 4th grade as the time when kids lost curiosity and when resentment and ennui overtook a joyful love of novelty and exploration. Yet even back in the mid-1980s, when nursery schools prioritized play, a study of preschoolers found that the average number of questions the children asked went from 26 per hour while at home to 2 per hour while in preschool.[15] Now, however, we have "schools" even for toddlers that rehearse them in phonics. Not surprisingly, today's children, subjected to planned curricula as early as nursery school and crushed by report cards with grades as tender kindergarteners, are reported to be losing interest in school as early as first grade.[16]

While standardized testing, overcrowding, and underfunding undoubtedly have particularly toxic effects on the pursuit of inquiry in classrooms, the "anaesthetizing of curiosity", in Paolo Freire's phrase, occurs in any conventional educational institution.[17] As researcher H. I. Day said, "To expect teachers who are trained to lead to get out of the way while students work off their curiosity is unreasonable."[18] In her book *The Hungry Mind*, Susan Engle devotes an entire chapter entitled "Curiosity Goes to School" to concretely describe how even the warmest, best-intentioned teachers who provide abundant hands-on learning situations kill curiosity in the quest to stay "on task" and cover the required material.[19]

Naturally, institutional imperatives such as grades, the ranking and sorting of students, and assessments of performance undermine the secure sense of self and the willingness to be vulnerable that are necessary for the flowering of curiosity. Engle further elaborates that uncertainty is key to learning; being shown how something works shrinks curiosity. Yet teachers are expected to structure their classrooms to transmit certainties and cultivate mastery over content as core tasks, rather than fostering exploration and uncertainty.[20]

Since the late 1960s, educational theorists have examined the hidden curriculum, the unspoken, inarticulate, or inexplicit lessons imparted by schools: that science is a separate subject

from history and art, that obedience will be rewarded, that learning can be quantified. Arguably, part of the hidden curriculum is the squelching of curiosity. Is that steamrolling of curiosity an actively conceived purpose of school, or just an incidental byproduct of other dynamics? In his essay "'The Masked Philosopher" Foucault described curiosity as a dangerous "casualness in regard to the traditional hierarchies of the important and the essential", and many critics over the years, from Pippi Longstocking to Charles Dickens, John Taylor Gatto, and John Holt have accused the educational guardians of the status quo of eagerly stamping out curiosity in order to enforce obedience.[21]

Ivan Illich terms teachers a fundamentally "disabling profession", a category of people who, in ostensibly seeking to help others, actually try to ensure that people cannot learn without them. Illich says that far-reaching monopolies in contemporary society (read "denial of access to the means of production") deprive the environment of the features needed to subsist outside the market economy, thereby ensuring that people cannot create their own use-values but must try to meet their needs by means of exchange values. In calling education a dominating and a disabling profession, he says that as a group, educators insert themselves into learning, so that "(t)he longer each person is in the grip of education, the less time and inclination he has for browsing and surprise." In other words, for Illich, educators spend time purposefully suppressing curiosity so that learning cannot and/or will not take place autonomously, outside of schools, or away from professional supervision.[22]

Incuriosity is a passive state, while having curiosity is active and implies a confidence that the curiosity can be satisfied. A curious person believes that they have those mental capacities to investigate and learn that are needed to assuage their curiosity. If and when someone comes to believe that it is impossible to figure things out, they cease to be curious and retreat instead to passive disinterest. By inserting themselves between you and anything you want to learn, as Illich put it, "educators" teach the implicit lesson that you are unable to learn anything without them. Your curiosity is of no avail, it will lead you astray and strew your path with red herrings. Just sit back and let the experts teach you.

In fact, as Matthew Crawford wrote, the spirit of inquiry is allied with "a desire to be master of one's own stuff. It is the prideful basis of self-reliance." Self-reliance is of course, entirely un-capitalist in both its inspiration and in its reality, focused as it is on the goals of self-sufficiency and dignity. As a trait reliant on autonomy and self-direction, curiosity is inherently resistant to authority, including that of teachers.[23]

Or perhaps the deadening of intellectual quests in schools is not purposeful, but merely results from the pursuit of other agendas? In this understanding, curiosity might represent to administrators and testers a failure to think in the capitalist terms of calculated opportunity costs. Curiosity would be seen as an instance of engaging in impractical and wasteful woolgathering rather than pursuing a goal-oriented task completion. Needless curiosity then becomes an obstacle to the smooth instruction in vocational skills or the imbuing of patriotism that **could** be taking place efficiently, instead of wasting time wondering about the unsale-able. We can debate what mix of conscious intention and collateral damage might be crushing wonder and wondering in schools, but there's no denying the essential reality in those buildings.

Students quickly learn to return the favor of disinterest that teachers and schools bestow on their questions. Herbert Kohl's classic essay "I Won't Learn From You" is just one articulation of what every teacher knows, namely that curiosity can be withheld as a mark of disfavor, rejection, or antagonism and frequently represents an attempt at defense—defense of the self from accusations or fears of failure, defense of a culture belittled or attacked by arrogant and hostile content.[24] In this way, too, curiosity and its absence is political, as attempts to pump children full of ideas unpalatable to them by virtue of their politics of superiority and arrogance, as well as by virtue of their hierarchical imposition, are met with the resistant Teflon wall of student boredom. Indeed, one of the marks of a good teacher is a wily ability to sneak through the cracks of student disengagement and arouse curiosity by creating subtle emotional alliances, while holding the school institution itself at arm's length.

Curiosity and Individualism

The inherently anti-authoritarian nature of curiosity raises unexpected questions. If curiosity grows from a desire for self-reliance, we must confront a potential association of curiosity with not only righteous rebellion but individualism, and thereby crack open a can of worms. Hegemonic American culture gives a (lip service) valorization to a kind of individualism that sees persistent curiosity as a non-conformist expression of hardiness and strength of character, resisting hierarchy; think here of the errant yet admired boys of old children's literature, like Huck Finn or Tom Sawyer or Penrod. We place in contrast to this view the often older, sometimes Puritanical and sometimes medieval, understanding of curiosity as a willful, headstrong product of the sins of pride and disobedience. Although radicals don't gravitate towards the second, oppressive view that advocates a submissive and enforced incuriosity, neither is the first, boosterish capitalist celebration of individualism appealing. We must ask ourselves, does cherishing curiosity spring from an ahistorical (capitalist) and individualist idea of human nature? Are we actually promoting capitalist personality types in cultivating curiosity?

I think not. The **reality** of the individual in a capitalist society deeply contradicts capitalist ideology; capitalism vaunts individualism, yet systematically disables our ability to self-provision and creates historically unprecedented dependencies.[25] Rather than believing the claim that under capitalism our individuality or our individual liberties are maximized, which they so clearly are not, perhaps we would do better to step back and consider how egalitarian societies have treated questions of individuality, conformity, and obedience. We might also imagine what our vision for the future entails. Anarchists and "libertarian socialists" (as Noam Chomsky often calls himself), particularly strongly in the global South, center the right to self-determination as not only compatible with but essential to socially just and egalitarian society. Indeed, "from each according to his or her ability and to each according to his or her need" holds great respect for the individual. In an egalitarian yet autonomist rather than institutionalist vision, many tensions over individualism dissolve, and support for (most forms of) individual curiosity becomes neither selfish nor ahistorical, but liberatory.[26]

Co-opting and Subverting Curiosity

What goes on in schools is part and parcel of the larger culture, and often is a mere reflection of it. If curiosity is doing so poorly in educational settings, what is happening to it in the wider world? First, we see the co-optation of curiosity for the purposes of power. Justin E. H. Smith writes that in our times, "…curiosity is co-opted by the state. And so begins the next chapter, the late modern chapter, of curiosity's history. Murals go up on the sides of public buildings depicting atoms, bridge builders, men in lab coats…. Now the state grows jealous of the curiosity of individuals, seeking not so much to squelch it as simply to channel it for the state's own interests. Every competence must have a license, and every interest an official association."[27]

In recent years, curiosity has also been quite explicitly tapped not just by political masters, but also by the corporate world. Harvard Business Review published a special spotlight section in its September-October issue in 2018 entitled "Why Curiosity Matters" to investigate "how leaders can nurture curiosity throughout their organizations and ensure that it translates to success." Outlining the benefits of curiosity—increased persistence and grit and less conflict in the workplace, among others—it discusses how to bolster curiosity by hiring managers who are curious and having "what if?" days where the "best" employee answers to those "what if?" questions were hung on the walls as a reward. (Shades of school, anyone?)[28]

Guillaume Paoli's aforementioned "falling rate of motivation" proposes that rather than a falling rate of profit as the Achilles heel of capitalism, an inexorably falling rate of motivation portends the end of our economic system. As bosses increasingly squeeze and control workers, workers become more and more listless and less and less motivated. As workers become

less motivated, bosses then squeeze and control them even more in an attempt to increase productivity, creating a constant downward spiral. Paoli's solution is for us to jump to the end point by engaging immediately in demotivational training and putting an end to the capitalist misery. No surprise that bosses haven't cottoned to that idea and continue to search for ways to motivate their workers; harnessing curiosity seems to be a new frontier in their struggle.

Insidiously, in the world of institutional education, where curiosity has died a particularly unhappy death, curiosity of a certain, success-producing sort is now being trumpeted and posed alongside the educationally faddish "grit", as writers such as Paul Tough, in How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character, advise us how to promote curiosity as a way to remedy children's supposedly deficient characters and thereby avoid actually remedying social inequality, or at least unequal schooling.[29] Similarly, the apparently irresistible capitalist urge towards transactional inducements has ironically led to the creation of an (extrinsic) award sponsored by the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania entitled the "Re-imagine Education--Cultivating Curiosity Award." The description announces that, "Successful projects will promote the value of curiosity as a tool for improving learning outcomes and/or employability." The Center for Curiosity, under whose umbrella the award lives, "seeks to understand how curiosity might be defined and measured, so that it might be harnessed…."[30]

As curiosity labors under the weight of its increasing co-optation on multiple fronts, we can look back at history and see that a refusal to be curious has been one form of a politics of resistance to the incorporation into The Establishment of previously embraced aspects of culture and schooling. Anti-intellectualism is a politics that has been engaged in not only by right-wing demagogues but also by the poor and the despised. Lawrence W. Levine remarked in Highbrow, Lowbrow that at the turn of the twentieth century Shakespeare, long popular across all socio-economic strata in the U.S., was not abandoned by the lower classes but instead was appropriated (or we might say enclosed) by the elite, leaving the lower classes to feel that Shakespeare no longer belonged to them.[31] When Shakespeare and Beethoven, or the engineering of bridges and science done in lab coats, are seized to become the clear cultural property of the elite, a lack of curiosity is engendered about literature and classical music and all those other realms of culture and knowledge newly anointed as highbrow and complicit in power. We observe here a historical confirmation that a happy or healthy curiosity requires some general sense of equality. A sense of inferiority leads not only to the withering of an ability to inquire, but also a resentment of the delineated realm of the socially superior and a refusal to be interested in it.

Curiosity and Ignorance

Looking past the notably skimpy academic investigation of curiosity, we can perhaps sidle up to the subject by drawing on the slightly richer study of ignorance for insight into **in**curiosity. Since curiosity is the personal and emotional expression of a desire to eliminate ignorance and is a means to accomplish that end, agnotology, as the philosophical study of ignorance, is closely allied to considerations of incuriosity. Incuriosity is both a cause of and a pathway to ignorance. Agnotologists describe, among many kinds of classification, three forms of ignorance: a native state of ignorance, a selective choice to be ignorant, and an active construction of ignorance. The two latter states of ignorance will be, must be, arrived at via a withholding or suppression of curiosity.

Just as agnotologists talk of willful ignorance, perhaps it is time to start talking about a willful incuriosity. And just as willful ignorance is not necessarily a negative, (as in a considered choice to not research the reprehensible), we must consider whether willful incuriosity is something that should necessarily be countered. When we encounter willful incuriosity, we must consider whether it may embody classism, racism, sexism or other relations of power, as those filled with arrogance refuse to learn about those they despise; this kind of withheld curiosity about something or someone can be a mark of social disdain, as well as a means to create the convenient

ignorance that allows an evasion of responsibility by the powerful. But willful incuriosity may also embody a resistance to the hateful knowledge that classism, racism or sexism has produced, as the despised refuse to learn the knowledge produced by the despisers. Willful incuriosity should not be besieged as a matter of course. It may serve personally and politically useful functions, protecting both individual selves as well as communities from corrosive undermining and emotional damage.[32]

But regardless of the roots of willful disinterest, and despite its occasional effectiveness in creating an insulation from personal or cultural assaults, a refusal to be curious has a disturbing double edge, creating dysfunction and toxicity at the same time as it provides certain kinds of protection. While we might applaud students' strategy of mental and emotional absence from damaging classroom scenarios they are forced into, or adults' refusal to attend to toxic material, the success of that strategy of disengagement bleeds into the rest of life. It is unlikely that children could spend their school hours in a state of sulky disinterest or an adult could live workdays in a stolid emotional refusal, and yet emerge unscarred into a healthy and happy exploration and embrace of possibility after walking out of the doors of school or workplace at the end of a day. Habits of mind and emotion are sculpted through practice and repetition and are not so easily donned and shed.

The Prospects for Curiosity

Our curiosity erodes thanks to educational violence, due to the pathologies generated by social hierarchy, as a result of co-optation by bosses, and through willful disinterest. It is also under assault by time poverty and speed. Several years ago in this journal, advocating a rejection of the pace of modern capitalism, Jeremy Hunsinger wrote, "Without the ability to change the environment or our situatedness in relation to our strategic speed, we are left with the only thing left to change, ourselves."[33] Curiosity may be the canary in the coal mine, the first part of our selves that changes, that suffocates when we are overwhelmed by warp peed.

Deep curiosity requires attention, presence, and alertness. A meaningfully alive public sphere requires a curiosity about and an active perception and acknowledgment of other humans. But we live in a world of disappearing attention, a failure to truly **attend**, which, after all, requires patience and waiting. Attention and curiosity, as opposites of apathy, in turn, require hope. Curiosity implies a sense of personal efficacy and possibility, a belief that one's curiosity might be fulfilled by one's own actions, as well as a sense of the future. The sense of powerlessness and precarity that dominate our mood today directly displace and preempt curiosity, creating instead that dominant effect of contemporary capitalism: anxiety. To occupy our anxious minds, which cannot attend, we replace true attention with aimless or idle distraction, both of which can, strangely enough, be encompassed within the meanings of the English language term "curiosity."[34]

On my 30 minute walk home from work on the day I had my epiphany, I saw: babies in strollers babbling and waving while their parent stared at a phone, dogs sniffing and exploring while their people stared at phones, cops in parked patrol cars flicking through phones, construction workers on lunch break staring at phones, a salon with a woman getting her nails painted and a woman getting her head massaged while each gazed at phones, and people with earbuds walking vacantly past a homeless man on the sidewalk. The night before I had stared in incredulity at a college student sitting at the edge of a stage in an intimate theater, swiping aimlessly through his glowing phone screen while one-foot away actors raged. (Presumably, this young man's behavior was the result of some combination of a lifetime of institutionalization in schools and current resentment at having to attend the theater as some kind of course requirement, and who knows, maybe I'd have done the same in his shoes.) Universally, undemanding screens entertained an aimless "curiosity" that stood in for the babies, dogs, public scenes, physical contact, and adult humans who would otherwise have required our attention.

The class session I left those few months ago, feeling despondent about my usefulness as a teacher, was one in which students idly scrolled through their handheld devices as a few of us held a conversation about climate change and the ecological state of the planet. Maybe they just wanted to hide from the terror of the topic, but they'd had the same reaction another day when we'd played with plants I had picked on my way into school, using the urban weed nature guides I'd brought to identify them. Was these students' apathy the result of a violent extinguishing of their curiosity by educational institutions, a sullen, resistant refusal to be curious in a college program they didn't really want to be in, a total failure of hope, a reactionary resentment of the politics of the course, or an expression of their incredible stress levels?

We'll all have to figure out such scenarios if we want to reach across the communicative chasms created by compulsion, resistance, arrogance, anger, despair, and anxiety. What my epiphany told me is that the very first thing we need to do, if we are going to build a joyful militancy, is to recognize that curiosity is not only an intellectual and academic concern. It is also an emotional, moral, and political state in desperate need of cultivation and tender loving care.

Endnotes

1. John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: The Free Press, 1944), 209.

2. The Institute for Precarious Consciousness, "Anxiety, affective struggle, and precarity consciousness-raising", Interface: a journal for and about social movements 6, No. 2 (2014): 271 – 300.

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From Bad Apples to Zombies? Walking Dead Leadership in the Contemporary University

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I put my hand up, I accessed adult sites; mistakes I know... I can't do anything other than plead stupidity.
Richard Higgott (former Vice Chancellor of Murdoch University)

I admit it. I want the world to be different. I want our universities to be different. Throughout my life in higher education, I have walked into rooms filled with empowered men twenty, thirty, and forty years older than me. I felt the Generation Xer anger – the disgust – in not holding any power and yet being a silent conspirator to the bullying, the lies, the injustices, the foolishness, the incompetence, the short-termism, and the thought bubbles that masquerade as vision statements.

I have waited for the generational transformation. But still, after all these decades, I still walk into too many rooms where baby boomers hold the power, title, and purse strings. I now hold a bit more of that power. But I am a woman and a Generation Xer. When I hold power, it is in a succession of 'glass cliff' posts.[1] I had hoped for more. I worked for change. But instead, the suits of those old men have been refitted on the younger. I want leadership to have a story. I want it to have meaning and purpose beyond a Key Performance Indicator, strategic plans, and vision statements. I have failed. I continue to fail. We must be honest: the 'leadership' situated in international higher education is – simply – extraordinary. This article draws the arrow between 'bad apple' leaders and institutionalized zombie leadership. The arrow is then fired, traversing the meaninglessness, incompetence, confusion, and apocalyptic rituals of our universities. I explore what happens when higher education is foreclosed, and we prepare for the university at the end of the world.

Just a Bad Apple?

Sex. Corruption. Lies. Stupidity. The Western Australian Corruption and Crime Commission, after investigating the Vice Chancellorship of Professor Richard Higgott at Murdoch University, a medium sized university based in the southern suburbs of Perth in Western Australia, found an array of irregularities, oddities, and stupidities.[2] With Higgott's regular visits to adult – but legal – sites, he put the 'vice' into vice chancellor. What is startling about the CCC's findings is that the Commission was surprised by the behavior of senior managers in universities. The investigation of Higgott revealed a pattern of patronage, including jobs bestowed to friends and acquaintances, interventions in shortlists and managerial excesses through entertainment expenses. Higgott needed to acknowledge his mistakes and 'stupidity.' But by investigating one individual and one institution, the rotten apple strategy, ofsustaining the power of the powerful by blaming one individual for bad behavior, was perpetuated.

Professor Higgott retaliated on July 6, 2016 with an article in the Higher Education section of The Australian. He confirmed that it was and is "standard practice" for Vice Chancellors to

interact with prospective appointees.[3] Whenever a phrase is used like 'standard practice,' or 'everyone does this,' a technique of neutralization[4] has been activated. This phrase, concept and argument was developed by Sykes and Matza in the American Sociological Review in 1957. It describes how poor decisions, illegal behavior, corruption, and deviancy of any kind are justified. 'Everyone' does not smoke marihuana, watch pornography, or illegally download music. The point being made by Higgott - that was not lost on higher education journalists - is that he was not a 'bad apple.' Indeed, Campus Watch confirmed,

> As events at Murdoch University clearly show, more oversight rather than less is needed to ensure transparency and due processes are followed. While new VC Eeva Leinonen has promised commitment to "integrity, respect and professional conduct" in the wake of the release of the CCC report, it will take more than aspirational statements to right the Murdoch ship.[5]

Neoliberalism – in its many permutations – maintains two principles: deregulation, removing 'the state' from moderation and management of 'public good,' and marketization, ensuring that private corporations and businesses compete with as few legal and governance restrictions as possible. In higher education, short term labor contracts, strategic plans and performance-linked financial packages are the most easily revealed of these characteristics.[6] At Murdoch University, these two forces of deregulation and marketization were channeled through one man: Mr David Flanagan. The Chancellor of Murdoch University who triggered and fuelled the investigations into Higgott was also the Manager Director of Atlas Iron. In 2014, he was awarded the Western Australian of the Year and the Western Australian Business Leader of the Year.[7] One year later – in 2015 – the profits and fortunes of Atlas Iron declined sharply. In response, Mr. Flanagan resumed the Managing Directorship, increased his own remuneration, and reduced the salaries of all other board members.[8] This was also a gendered decision. The new chairman, Cheryl Edwardes, had her salary halved. She was one of the few women managing an ASX-listed company, yet she fulfilled those responsibilities on a baseline salary.[9]

Through all the turmoil at Murdoch University during his chancellorship and the problems confronting Atlas Iron, Mr Flanagan was re-instated for another three-year term at Murdoch. It is difficult to imagine a university confronting a more damaging series of events. The Vice Chancellor was reported to the Corruption and Crimes Commission. The Chancellor was renewed for a three-year term. Indeed, it was the Chancellor's decision – not an institutional decision – that he would not complete a third term.[10]

To review the story so far. An academic leader of a university was removed from office. He was configured as a 'bad apple' in senior executive management within higher education. A chief mining executive who was appointed the chancellor and removed the 'bad apple' remained at the University until he decided he would not continue to a third term in the post. The starkness and irrationality of these tumbling decisions "has raised questions on the authenticity of leadership behavior and style."[11] Such behaviors are not only personally damaging, but shred organizational culture, branding, and profile. Instead of confronting how this mess was created, and with the 'support' of Chancellor Flanagan and Murdoch's Senate, the CCC stated that, "If they ever were, universities are no longer leafy and leisurely hubs of academic research and teaching but also businesses to be operated according to modern principles of efficiency, fairness and sound industrial relations."[12] Universities are funded by public money. While this level of public support is declining, this financial support requires that all dealings – industrial or otherwise – at a university are transparent. Regulation and governance are required. However, universities are much more than a mining company or 'businesses to be operated according to modern principles of efficiency.' Teaching and learning are not efficient. Research is loss-leading in most disciplines, most of the time. Universities are markedly different from a bank, a food retailer, or a mine. Their 'business' is knowledge, teaching, and learning. Currently, anti-intellectual men (and a few women) occupy the role of chancellor. They lack high-level qualifications, experience, and expertise in teaching and learning. They do not research and hold no research

expertise. One contemporary example is Julie Bishop, the Chancellor at the Australian National University (ANU). A former deputy leader of the Liberal Party, she represented a parliamentary seat in Western Australia and completed a law degree at Adelaide University. Her twenty-year parliamentary career is connoted as the experience and expertise required for this role, while also noting she is the first female Chancellor of ANU since it was founded in 1946. Considering that business and politics are the most common background of Chancellors, what is their function? Is an academic council or its equivalent acting as a board of directors for a publicly-listed company? Without clarity in the Chancellor's function, they are currently imposing a very specific rendering of managerialism through gatekeeping Vice Chancellors. The "STEM-ification of Education" is an attempt to 'reform' universities to slot into the needs of 'business.'[13] The paradox emerges in and through neoliberalism. Universities require powerful and clear governance protocols to ensure that degrees are not bought and sold. Money cannot buy a qualification. Money cannot buy the entrance to a university if intelligence and academic results are lacking. Therefore, a university can never operate on 'modern principles of efficiency.' Learning, achievement, and excellence are not for sale.

Not surprisingly, the tale does not end here. Under a new Vice Chancellor, Murdoch University soon confronted another scandal. Poor leadership is never a matter of 'bad apples.' It signifies caustic structures, cancerous visions, and zombie appointment protocols. With unfortunate publicity impacting on the enrolments of students, an investigative journalist with the ABC's Four Corner's program discovered that aberrances were emerging in the enrolment of international students with regard to their admission and the marking of their papers throughout their degree programs. One of the informants for the program, Associate Professor Gerd Schroder-Turk, was sued by Murdoch University. The grounds for this legal action was that the University sought compensation for a loss of student numbers after the irregularities were revealed. Schroder-Turk was a member of Murdoch's Senate, and this was used as the foundation for the claim. Instead of confronting the core issue of irregularities in the admissions and progression of international students, legal action was commenced against an individual staff member who was individually blamed and sued for a decline in university enrollments.[14] This publicity resulted an array of high-profile complaints, a visiting professor resigning from Murdoch,[15] and online commentary through social media adding to the pressure and problems. With thousands of signatures, the university finally ceased the financial damages component of the legal proceeding.[16] Murdoch University removed a 'bad apple' Vice Chancellor replacing him – perhaps predictably – with a woman, Professor Eeva Leinonen. Yet the problems, the dissonance, the errors, and confusions at Murdoch continue. There are no bad apples. There are zombie structures.

This article is not a justification of Professor Richard Higgott's behavior. It is not a celebration of the role of the Crime and Corruption Commission in discovering and shaming a wayward vice chancellor. Instead, I remain interested in the clash of cultures between patronage and governance, scholarship and performance management, excellence, and efficiency. I argue that zombie leadership – rather than a series of 'bad apples' - is a lens through which to understand contemporary higher education. When Stephen Hacker published his famous study – "Zombies in the workplace" – he focussed on zombie workers.[17] He described a disconnected, bored, and disenchanted group of employees. In many ways, this analysis was a replaying of Marx's alienated proletariat, but with popular cultural credibility. My interpretation of organizational culture in this article is distinct. I focus – squarely and without flinching – at the zombie leadership in higher education. When seeing titles like Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellor, Dean, and Professor, there is an expectation of knowledge, authenticity, credibility, skill, and expertise. Yet often, these are now zombie leadership titles, filled with toxicity, brutality, and rudimentary business principles. This textbook, bullet-pointed neoliberalism is not my target in this article. John Smyth's The Toxic University accomplished this task with relish and panache.[18] I affirm Smyth's argument that autonomy in research and teaching has been crushed. Conversely though, I do not celebrate unregulated, anti-statist academia. This patronage model of scholarship was male, white, colonizing, and heteronormative. Anti-statism is not a medication to neoliberalism.

State-based regulation can and does offer an intervention in the heteronormative 'business' of the university. The ill-focussed neoliberal concepts – market forces, competition, and KPIs – are not functional in a university environment because teaching and learning will always cost more than the delivery of a conventional service. Research, particularly lab-based and clinical research, is incredibly expensive and only reveals results in the long-term, if ever. Decades of research in surface science is required to create effective interventions in additive manufacturing. This article stands for governance, state regulation, and international standards. It walks a different path from Smyth. Yes, universities can be – and frequently are – toxic workplaces. But the recognition that the very definition of university leadership is a zombie concept creates much more damage than toxicity in working conditions. Inelegant andragogical strategies manage the widening participation agenda. Fordist learning management systems, that were obsolete before their installation on the institutional server, are imposed on curricula. Research metrics are deployed that are completely inappropriate to the majority of disciplines.

Neoliberalism is not to blame for the toxic daily rhythms, choices, and expectations. That is the point. Neoliberalism, post the Global Financial Crisis, is also a zombie concept. What is happening in higher education is deeper, more disturbing, and normalized. While located within Critical University Studies, and recognizing "neoliberalism's stealth revolution,"[19] this article is also situated in an uncomfortable scholarly reality. As Filip Vostal confirmed, "the more critique there is of the neoliberal takeover of the university, the more neoliberal academia gets."[20] Therefore, this article does not offer grand statements of resistance. It offers a targeted theorization of what leadership means in the contemporary university.

To provide a theory of leadership in higher education, I reactivate Ulrich Beck's zombie concept to diagnose the shambling sickness in our institutions. I enact this process with the goal of reimaging and reimagining of higher education as part of critical university studies. However, I do not value or validate cosmopolitan sociology that was the frame for Beck's work. One of the key reasons why neoliberalism has survived after the Global Financial Crisis is that intellectual tools have not been appropriate to build an alternative model. This article is part of a much wider and deeper intellectual shift: from cosmopolitan sociology to claustropolitan cultural studies.[21] This paper moves through a discussion of the zombie, traversing Beck's zombie categories and concepts,[22] and then activating the theorization of zombie leadership within the claustropolitan university.[23] We finish with death (obviously) and summon the university at the end of the world.

Zombies Studies

Zombies have been selected with intent in this article to scaffold a new interpretation of leadership. It is more than a metaphor. Derived from the lowest of low culture – horror films, gaming, and comic books – they are part of a suite of claustropolitan popular culture[24] that proclaims the end of the world. Best captured by Romero's Night of the Living Dead and updated with a comedic twist through Shaun of the Dead and the Zombieland franchise, and in the brutalist high popular cultural form via The Walking Dead, the white walkers also make key appearances in Game of Thrones, and Breaking Bad. This is a post-apocalyptic future. The past walks through – and decays in – the present. This decaying past then infiltrates and infects the future. The dead live amongst us and want to kill us. Shawn McIntosh confirmed that,

> The unique balancing act that zombies represent between control and enslavement, strength and weakness, us and them, and group versus individual identity offers a window into better understanding why we enjoy the horror genre in particular and how we perceive ourselves and certain aspects of popular culture in general.[24]

The death of a zombie is brutal, killed through brain trauma. From this violent attack on the already dead, a bite creates another zombie. The contagion is spread through contact. This is a

resonant method of proliferation in our present. This simplicity summons the zombie trope in unusual ways.[26] Simon Orpana noted that "the zombie reproduces through consumption, not procreation."[27] Life is consumed and toxicity is perpetuated and enlarged.

Zombie narratives have two endings: all zombies are killed or all humans are killed. This binary is then punctuated by a perpetual displacement of this ending. Every post-apocalypse signals a rebirth.[28] Zombie time is cyclical, not linear. This necropower holds an ontological function. Toni Negri and Felix Guattari stated that, "politics today is nothing more than the expression of the domination of dead structures over the entire range of living production."[29] With the increasing scholarly interest in zombies, innovative theorizations are emerging in our understandings of work, family, truth, and power after the Global Financial Crisis. Indeed, as Si Sheppard confirmed, "what can zombies tell us about what we really need to know: how to get by after the total collapse of modern post-industrial civilization?"[30] Zombies have not remained satiated in low popular culture. They are shuffling – relentlessly - through metaphors and tropes, infiltrating politics, high theory, and economics. Together a tentative, shambling but fascinating Zombie Studies[31] is emerging. The undead enable thought experiments about bodies, consciousness, and identity. For this article, they provide a mechanism to understand leadership. Therefore, the next stage of this article transforms "zombie" from a noun and into an adjective, to explore Ulrich Beck's zombie concept, with the imperative to explore how leadership operates within a university sector lacking a vision and purpose.

Zombie Categories and Concepts and the end of Cosmopolitanism

Ulrich Beck's zombie concept first appeared in interviews with Beck in 2000 and was used interchangeably with zombie categories. An interview between Beck and Jonathan Rutherford, published in 2000, captured the early configurations of this idea.[32] Rutherford described this term as a combination of "sociology and horror."[33] In this interview, Rutherford offered a concise definition of the term.

> There is a paradox. Changes are occurring faster in people's consciousness than in their behaviour and social conditions. This mixture of new consciousness and old conditions has created what he [Beck] describes as Zombies categories – social forms such as class, family or neighbourhood, which are dead, yet alive.[34]

Beck presented his interpretation through examples: "family, class and neighbourhood."[35]

> **JR:** Zombies are the living dead. Do you mean that these institutions are simply husks that people have abandoned?
>
> **UB:** I think people are more aware of the new realities than the institutions are. But at the same time, if you look at the findings of empirical research, family is still extremely valued in a very classical sense. Sure there are huge problems in family life, but each person thinks that he or she will solve all those problems that their parents didn't get right.[36]

This selection of examples is important. Zombie concepts like 'family' were integral to the cosmopolitan sociology world view. Cosmopolitanism was a way for Beck to overcome what he termed "methodological nationalism,"[37] which referred to "internal globalization, globalization from within the national societies."[38] As the concept began being used by other scholars, the nation-state within globalization was the key example.[39] The rationale for their use is more complex. While the social purpose of these concepts has been lost, something is gained from their maintenance. They are terms of safety, understanding, and compliance. In moving into a claustropolitan cultural studies, not only are the more predictable 'family' and 'nation' reconfigured

as zombie concepts, so are 'universities' and 'leadership.'

Through the lightning rod political period of 2001 and 2002, Beck's concept jutted from his longer-term exploration on "reflexive modernity" as he stressed the plurality of poststructuralism.[40] He argued that there is a new rendering of modernity, "a new kind of capitalism, a new kind of labour, a new kind of everyday life, and a new kind of state are in the making."[41] The optimism and hope of cosmopolitan sociology saturate this sentence.

> I think we are living in a society, in a world, where our basic sociological concepts are becoming what I call 'zombie categories.' Zombie categories are 'living dead' categories which govern our thinking but are not really able to capture the contemporary milieu. In this situation I don't think it's very helpful only to criticize normal sociology, and to deconstruct it. What we really need is to redefine, reconstruct and restructure our concepts and our view of society.[42]

Beck recognized the globalizing change, yet he affirmed that a better society was emerging. His analytical error was to enfold this realization into cosmopolitan sociology. He did not see that cosmopolitan sociology was in itself a zombie category, eaten alive by claustropolitanism. The zombie concept, for Beck, is tethered to 'the state' and therefore is rigid, dominating, and a problem. Cosmopolitan sociology has a tendency towards anti-statism, through its commitment to community, multiculturalism, and organic and authentic connections between groups. But this rendering is narrow and can bleed into a critique of public health, public education, regulation, and governance. This mode of anti-statism created the political space for neoliberalism. Once the state was removed from regulation and management of public good, the flow and mobility so welcomed by the cosmopolitan sociologists such as Ulrich Beck, John Urry, Scott Lash, and Anthony Giddens was used to move capital without regulation but block the movement of people. The building of walls between nations and Brexit are two of the more visible examples.

If reconfigured in claustropolitanism, rather than cosmopolitanism, then dystopia, catastrophe, and the post-apocalyptic reality of work, health, energy, food, and water can be understood. Claustropolitanism transforms our understanding of beginnings and endings, with a sharp recalibration of globalization. The insolvency of ideas, the reduction in both standards and regulation, creates a space where Key Performance Indicators and stretch targets replace discussions of quality. Outputs, metrics, and leader boards attempt to measure and reify complex discussions of teaching and learning. Therefore, a recalibration of the zombie concept, recognizing how normative terms have been emptied of meaning through the widening participation agenda, September 11, the War on Terror, and the Global Financial Crisis, results in a revisioning of the University. Zombie Studies – appropriately – relentlessly attacks the bizarre, the grotesque, the unfathomable, and the frightening to understand higher education at the end of the world.

Zombie Leadership in Claustropolis

The key application and transformation of Beck's concept that I summon in this paper is zombie leadership. When the word 'leadership' is used, it still carries familiarity – like the zombie's body – yet when investigating the contents, they are not only surprising but toxic, dangerous, and contagious. Moving from a cosmopolitan to a claustropolitan frame, this is leadership that forecloses alternatives, shrinks the spaces for critique, and activates a precariat workforce. My argument is framed and shaped by ultra-realist criminology and deviant leisure paradigms. As Thomas Raymen and Oliver Smith have confirmed, our time is punctuated by "meta-crises of liberal capitalism," "harmful subjectivities," and "normalised harm."[43] Instead of deviant leisure, I twist these theories to the deviant university. Researchers, teachers, and professional staff believe we know what happens in 'a university.' The terms 'professor,' 'dean' and 'vice chancellor' appear to convey meaning. But this form has been taken over, destroyed, killed, and reinhabited by deadly content. The patterns, practices, and behaviors in higher education

summon harmful subjective leadership, commodifying learning, teaching, and research while crushing freedom, choices, and education beyond the imperatives of the market. In the last twenty years, the institution has been transformed by non-researchers and non-teachers. This group actively choose to not research and teach, and enter a third stream: "academic managers." In this absence – in this ambiguity[44] – leadership organizes, shapes, and resurrects dead ideas – like 'quality,' 'employability,' and 'rigor' – to summon the presence of life and movement in the institution.

Zombies crush binarized models of thought. They challenge the parameters of life and living. Most importantly, they play with the clock. Linear time is no longer a guide through the zombie apocalypse. The past, present, and future all live, breathe, walk, eat, and kill. There will not be a happy ending. There is always another Key Performance Indicator, change management initiative, and restructure. Similarly, there is always a zombie moment when the non-zombie has to choose to kill the mother, father, husband, wife, or child that has become infected or join them in zombieland. This is the decision we must make in a university. We sit through the meetings. We nod. We allow phrases like "efficiency dividends" to wash over us. Yet when sitting through these meetings, are we becoming zombies, infected by the bite of banality, mediocrity, and compliance? Leadership in universities is part of the wider institutional bureaucratization. The minutia of processes and procedures are intentionally alienating the workforce. It eats brains. It works from the assumption that the valuable is measurable. The Vice Chancellors and Academic Councils foreclose alternatives, options, and distributed leadership. This is top-down execution of power. It is a critique of regulation and governance through atomized, marketized, individualized neoliberalism. This individual scholar, research, learner, or student is supposedly free and autonomous. Yet this freedom is framed by the toxic market environment configured by post-industrial economic structures. The fetishization of employability, graduate attributes, and industry partnerships – as a mantra, objective, and outcome – perpetuates the future-fuelled narrative that university has a purpose, meaning, history, and future. Actually, it is dead. It is still moving and led by leadership that invests – deeply – in a utopic and futuristic tale of growth, efficiency, and outcomes, assessed by metrics without a history of disciplinary context.

Deindustrialization, alongside casualized and temporary jobs that were later enfolded into the term precariat,[45] resulted in cultures of bullying, humiliation, and vulnerability. Fear was and is palpable. Stanley Aronowitz wrote The Knowledge Factory in the year 2000.[46] His argument was that a management class, group, tier or stream had emerged in universities. These were the men and women who had failed or underperformed in teaching and research and entered management, ruling over those who had success in the spheres in which they had failed. This under-performing, anti-intellectual leadership group introduced terms, phrases and practices like key performance indicators, strategic plans, and performance management. John Smyth et al. refer to such leadership practices as a "zombie approach,"[47] moving through a script with a pre-determined outcome. Higher education leadership has been infected and replaced with processes and practices that operate in a bank or corporation. Such a process has been enabled because, as Wolfgang Streeck confirmed, there has been a "splitting of democracy from capitalism through the splitting of the economy from democracy."[48] This "de-democratization of capitalism" has created the de-democratization of education. Leadership becomes aloof, frightening, and disturbing.

Leadership is not a series of characteristics or a checklist. It is the development and management of relationships[49] and communication systems. Indeed, zombie films like Day of the Dead have been used as a way to research leadership in extreme environments.[50] Institutional risk and responsibility are cascaded to a departmental level and the "manager-academic."[51] Power is maintained by the powerful. Alternatives are crushed. The consequences of this process are that disempowered groups like women 'lead' against their best interests. However, as Tanya Fitzgerald has argued, this process "co-opts women into neo-liberal and managerial discourses that run counter to the security of equitable outcomes."[52] Line management is based on the presumption that employees are in a line and managed in a linear fashion. While this configuration may operate

in banking and retail industries, higher education is based on an excellent model for teaching and research. The irrationality of line management means that individual "manager-academics" are line managing people who are better teachers and researchers than they are. What possible authority – except claustropolitanism fuelling the end of the world – could an under-performing academic hold in a managerial role? He or she is summoning a dead concept, assuming power and authority that they do not deserve and perpetuating it through fear. The power that they hold is brittle and tenuous, granted on the basis of a title, rather than ability.[53]

Jeff Hearn, the great scholar of masculinity, marinated gender through this discussion of power.

> Women were excluded from universities for much of their history. Men still dominate the highest positions in universities in most disciplines. The higher the status of the university, the more male dominated it is.[54]

This gap between competency and credibility could be masked when financial conditions were buoyant. Now, misogyny is revealed with stark brutality in the zombie university. The heroic narrative of "individualism, self-governance, and patriarchal leadership"[55] is perpetuated through catastrophic restructures, change management, and relentless claims of 'efficiency.' The Global Financial Crisis and the cascading economic, social, health and educational traumas through COVID, confirmed that the inflated imaginings of finance capitalism, real estate capitalism, and higher education capitalism were not real or sustainable. It is no surprise that the research literature on the political economy is filled with metaphors, tropes, and theories of zombies. The literature on the university also became infected. Andrew Whelan, Ruth Walker, and Christopher Moore's Zombies in the Academy[56] showed the consequences of automating and dumbing down teaching through templated learning management systems. They also reveal the pretensions of journal publishers asking universities to pay for access to publications that scholars have provided for free.

There were profound problems with the patronage model in the older universities. The solution to those problems is increased regulation and transparent governance, rather than neoliberal ideologies of deregulation and anti-statism that have been proven – time and again – to fail. The excuse to not hire women, indigenous scholars, scholars of color, and researchers and teachers with impairments during the patronage model of the university was that they lacked the qualifications and experience. Now that these groups have gained this experience and expertise, the institutions have to summon new excuses – beyond merit - to continue to hire men and the occasional woman that concur with their political perspective. Intriguingly, to enhance and enable this ideology, competition, and the market are removed from the selection process. The proliferation of executive search firms, pretending universities are hiring a CEO, and direct appointments to posts without any tethered advertisement, means that transparency of the procedure is usurped. Universities have always been institutions of patronage. White men hired other white men who went to Cambridge or Yale or Sydney or British Columbia. But this mode of patronage has changed. There is intent and will in the hiring of underqualified people with experiences so far outside of high-level scholarship that there is no connection between their professional lives and teaching and learning in a university.

The patronage model of universities cracked with fatigue. It could no longer be patched to 'manage' feminism, postcolonialism, anti-racism, the decline in public funding for higher education, industry 'partnerships', and widening participation. Universities remain a site of struggle, and the outcome of that struggle matters to the intelligence and future of our societies. So many of the stories of personal and professional attacks, ontological violence, bullying, silence and resignations are erased by and through zombie leadership. Yet some of these stories survived the apocalypse and are now being published.[57]

What these emerging stories reveal is that thousands of people are infected by the incompetence of a zombie leader. The management literature has raised some key questions about the scandals and catastrophes that emerge from such decisions. As Mehta and Maheshwari

have suggested, "such occurrences have raised questions on the intentions and objectives of leaders and whether these failures were deliberate or due to the incompetence in these arrogant and impulsive leaders."[58] When unchallenged, their behavior escalates. However, in universities, zombie leadership emerges because it is difficult to determine or locate 'the purpose' of the institution. Is it to 'train workers'? Is it to be the outsourced research and development department for international corporations? Is it to mask the labour surplus? In such a gap – where the objective of a university is ambiguous – zombie leadership enters the institution, inventing mission statements, key performance indicators, and strategic plans. The speed of change[59] – through digitization, disintermediation, and deterritorialization – creates a culture of disruption, confusion and disappointment. Such ruptures result in putting "the lifeless in charge of training the life-inspired."[60] This is a deadly metaphor, troubling and frightening in equal measure. Students arrive at a university to change their lives and improve their communities. University academics read, write, experiment, and think to enlarge the parameters of knowledge. The notions that universities have the right and the responsibility to be institutions of higher learning, sites of aspiration where the best minds of one generation instruct the next, have been lost here. This is what Guy Standing described as "the spectre of teacherless universities backed by panopticon techniques."[61] If zombie leadership continues without critique, our universities will implode. But as with the discovery of the first zombie, it is already too late. The future has been foreclosed. The content and commitment housed in a university have been killed. We live, work, learn, and research in a deadly husk with no hope. Therefore, it is appropriate to conclude this theorization of leadership in the university at the end of the world with one of these silent stories of death, silence, and Baudrillian disappearance.

A Deathly Conclusion

8am. A zombie dean summoned two tenured professors to see her. I know about this event because I was one of those professors. My companion was also known to me: my late husband, Professor Steve Redhead. Importantly, death follows us into this conclusion. The meeting request was delivered the afternoon before the 8 am meeting, with no details about its rationale or purpose. The message simply confirmed that an HR representative would also be present at the appointed time. Within a minute of our arrival, the function of the meeting became clear: to humiliate, attack, create fear, and damage our international profile. She had two agenda items for the meeting. Firstly, she wished to discuss my teaching evaluation of a first-year course that had just been released at the end of the semester. This student survey confirmed my position as the best teacher in the university. Within a minute of the meeting starting, she threw a printed copy of the review in my direction and shouted, "You are not as good as you think you are" and "Everybody gets results like this." When I smiled at both the Dean and the HR representative, I made the obvious statement that the institutional mean delivered with my results confirmed that she was factually incorrect. The shouting continued, and she threatened me with disciplinary action for questioning her views. The HR staff member remained as quiet as Yoko Ono at the Let it Be sessions. That metaphor operates at multiple levels.

I was merely the entrée to the meat of the meeting. The zombie dean then turned to Steve Redhead and stated that she was refusing his request to attend his father's funeral. The staff leave guidelines had rendered "compassionate leave" at the discretion of the line manager. She deployed her discretion with aplomb and concluded with a pained and pointed flourish: "all of us have personal problems, Steve." Again, the representative from Human Resources remained silent. There was nothing to say. We filed out of the meeting with shock, horror, and confusion. When humanity and civility are ripped from the skin of our universities, the zombie leadership structure is revealed in its revulsion, repulsion, and disgust. To change metaphors, we only have to lift the lid on the Tupperware to see the rotting flesh decaying in the container. David McNally described these moments best: "the genuinely traumatic (monstrous) experiences of subjugation

and exploitation that occur when people find themselves subordinated to the market-economy."[62] The consequence of this meeting was profound. Steve did not attend his father's funeral. He made peace with this decision in public. But I was sleeping with him. I remember the nightmares. The sad yelps in the night. The tired and tragic eyes in the morning. Closure is a cliché. But regret, disillusionment, and disappointment are real and acidic in their application.

As I left the Dean's office on that cold morning – in temperament as much as temperature – I made a decision that if we ever escaped this Hotel California of a university, then I would move into academic leadership. No one in my care would have to confront the arbitrariness, the ambiguity, the fear, and the threat. But could I move from academic to academic manager? As a female academic, it is assumed I am in deficit. The white man trained in the lab-based sciences is the trusted container for leadership. They breathe gravitas. All other models and modes of leadership must be tested, trialed and questioned, assuming that they will be found wanting. I started my academic management career at one of the most lowly-ranked universities in the United Kingdom, moving to a leadership role in a regional Australian university, and I am currently a dean of graduate research. Part of the argument of this article is that I ask colleagues to consider the importance of leadership in their own lives and institutions. I want to believe that a leader can change the experience and career trajectory of students and academics. The consequences of bullying staff or sitting and doing nothing, as exhibited by that HR representative in the story that commenced this conclusion, are vast. The scale of the suicide rates – triggered by management bullying – of academics is now being revealed.[63]

But… But… Do these individual commitments and statements matter? Those of us still – temporarily – uninfected can occupy leadership. We can – temporarily – stop the abuse, bullying, and ridicule. But this is a zombie higher education sector. The structures are sick. The learning outcomes are purulent. The strategic plans are septic. Professional development reviews are weeping wounds of irrational expectations. The KPIs are contagions. The visions are diseased.

The answer is clear. We cannot stop the toxicity. This is the insight granted through the contextualization of the zombie concept in claustropolitanism, rather than Beck's cosmopolitanism. A better day is not coming. The future is not promised. The future is foreclosed and the present is infecting today and tomorrow. The slither of difference – the spark of hope – that is possible through a different model of educational leadership provides transitory safety. For a few academics and administrators, in a few small organizational units and for a short time, survival is possible. Hope is possible. But this is a temporary respite. The zombie apocalypse of restructures, zero-hour contracts, the precariat workforce, 360-degree reviews, amalgamations, 'fake news,' 'post-truth,' and 'self-plagiarism' emerge to cower workers and compress robust, independent and expansive scholarly work. Wellbeing and corporate fitness challenges are the claustropolitan replacement for social justice and inclusivity. Indeed, as the zombie dean confirmed, we all have personal problems. But we are also – concurrently - walking through the collapse of a scholarly institution with pockets of respite and perhaps a stitch of resistance.

This is a story – this is an article – of death and despair. The word story has been used intentionally. The story I have told about the zombie dean and my father-in-law's funeral is real. But it bubbles through Baudrillard's simulacrum, signifiers hooking and unhooking through my life. Such stories are invisible, forgotten, displaced, and silenced. In this case, the Dean's term was not extended, and she slithered into a minor management role in a minor college after her destruction of a faculty and the lives and careers of colleagues. The Vice Chancellor who oversaw such behavior was a one-term president. The Provost at the time simply disappeared from the university one night and never returned to academia. Perhaps these endings – of walking away, silence, disappearance, humiliation, and mediocrity – are appropriate. But eight tenured professors left that university during the period of her deanship. That sentence is easy to compose on a screen. Consider the consequences on eight families, selling houses, moving schools, partners changing jobs, partners separating, and unstable finances through the stressful period of both finding and arriving at a new post. These stories are also silent. They are stories of suffering, fear, and trauma caused by one Dean who was empowered by zombie structures within a university.

But where do these stories live? Where do they fit in leadership theory or higher education studies? Surveys reveal the scale of the mental health crisis in universities. Such articles make a splash in the specialist higher education publications.[64] On a daily basis, horror stories are revealed through gossip and whispers in corridors. These stories survive in shared nods between former colleagues as they meet in airports, conferences, or carparks. LinkedIn connections continue relationships severed by destructive management practices. Significantly, the Dean, in this case, had to move countries, and from a minor university to an even more marginal college. She is still in a leadership position, albeit invisible in international higher education. As to the rest of the participants in that early morning meeting, the outcomes have not been as benevolent. Steve Redhead died of pancreatic cancer in 2018, having attained leadership posts and professorships in Australia after this incident. Unlike his father, he did not want a funeral and kept his illness a secret until I announced his death. His voice and views about zombie leadership are silenced. His story has died, with some provocative digital firesticks remaining through podcasts, videos and publishing.

What is left? What residue do such contexts and stories leave? Is this stain erased by time? The human resources staff member is still working at that university. Her views, feelings, and interpretations of this event remain unclear. But she attempted to contact us – with some urgency - after our resignations. Perhaps this was risk management. Perhaps to offer an apology. Yet she remains in work, managing the life and career of academics and professional staff, normalizing the aberrant, brutalizing, nasty and pointless. Silence is powerful.

And – at least currently – I am alive and in a position of leadership. I make an individual decision each day to behave delicately, compassionately, and carefully. People do matter. Individuals do matter. But I am part of a small band of scholars that will succumb to the zombie hoard. The weak – the compassionate – will be infected. If they are not, then they will be removed from the organization at the conclusion of their glass cliff contract, which is death of a different kind - through disappearance. And silence.

Zombies are intellectually productive. As an agent in social science fiction, they teach us about power, work, class, consumerism, gender, race, waste, and death. They show what happens when traditional authority structures corrode and collapse. Popular culture remains andragogical. It teaches, shapes, shares, and frames meaning. Zombies are not a proxy for everyday life. They are exceptional, extreme, and disturbing. They remind us that we are being watched. We are in danger. This is why the paradigmatic shift from cosmopolitanism to claustropolitanism is required.[65] September 11 and the Global Financial Crisis created the framework for Trump, Brexit and a series of wars on 'terror' without an enemy, focus, or exit strategy. This is politics conducted by tweets. This is diplomacy conducted through bullying and bitchiness. There is no happy ending. No light at the end of the tunnel. No resistance or the good fight. This is survival in a university at the end of the world. Each day matters. And today – now – this moment - is all that is left. We are, as Redhead described, "jacking into the trajectories of the catastrophic."[66]

Talking Heads were wrong. We are not on the road to nowhere. We are on the road to the university at the end of the world. We require a new lexicon: a language for the death of the university. Deans, Vice Chancellors, and Professors used to be nouns with meaning. Now, the assumed content in these words have been sucked out, leaving hollow roles, positions, and functions. Concurrently, Higher Education Studies has become stuck in a Ground Hog Day of recurrent crises. Instead, the crisis has happened. It is over. The post-crisis institution is now staffed and lead by the living dead. This is the point about zombie leadership, arching beyond Beck's original conceptualization, and reminds us about the role of zombies in popular culture. Zombies kill, destroy, frighten and provoke. But there are always those few remarkable survivors that take the twisted, broken and beaten shards of life after the apocalypse and go again, keep walking, and build something new. Those of us who work and survive in universities and remain uninfected have some choices to make. We can pretend we are zombie academics to protect our short-term future. Or we can become visible – be heard – and ensure that the knowledge we gain is mobile, active, agitated, and relevant. Universities will always be so much more than a business.

We are the brain of the culture. Occasionally we have the chance to be the memory of a culture as well.

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The Revolution of Facebook: Political Education on Social Media through Nonformal Andragogical Communities of Practice

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Introduction

As social media has become more and more ubiquitous in 21st-century society, many have moved into silos in their use of social media. Facebook is one platform which has several member created groups varying a panoply of interests. The history of learning about communism has been a mix of propaganda and education, fraught with controversy. This paper seeks to explore the phenomenon of Facebook groups that advocate for communism, considering them as digital nonformal andragogical educational communities of practice.

Justification

Most literature about Facebook in Education and its communities of practice has centered on formal educational environments, like classes, and has not focused on nonformal (outside of the classroom) environments outside of structured education. Keles (2018) has considered the interplay of teachers and students in sharing responsibility for learning within Facebook groups. Wong et al. (2011) explored knowledge building and collaborative learning on Facebook communities of practice through analysis of student messages, and Kenney et al. (2013) analyzed the peer support of doctoral students within their Facebook community to achieve common goals. Whittaker et al. (2014), through the study of undergraduate science students, have concluded that Facebook can be used to create an online educational community benefiting social support, problem-solving, and effective communication. Avram (2014) has examined the use of Facebook groups in the academic communication process within higher education between and amongst teachers and students. Cunha Jr. et al. (2016) have reported that Facebook groups have led to improved communication between students and teachers as well as improving the engagement of students. The field of Education has been documenting formal education when exploring communities of practice on Facebook and has not extensively investigated nonformal education, which is a common locale for the development of andragogy.

Research on group behavior and political expression on Facebook has not focused mainly on education or communities of practice. Liu et al. (2017) have explored Facebook user reticence to

express political opinions. Ferrara (2012) has shown the reproducibility of community structure on Facebook through algorithmic analysis. Dobrowsky (2012) has researched identity construction through "…spaces of communication, in which individuals can work on their identity in processes of interaction" (p. 91), allowing the sampling of different identities which was previously much more limited in history. Du Preez and Lombard (2014) contend that while memes are part of identity construction, they are also part of identity display as they reveal true impressions of the user's offline persona. Casteltrione (2014) has proposed that Facebook can decrease the risk of political fragmentation and polarization, and elsewhere that members pre-existing levels of political activity reflect their mobilization efforts on Facebook (Casteltrione, 2016). Kearney (2016) connects political engagement on Facebook with interpersonal goals theory concluding that "…political posts entail greater affective and interaction-related risks than following political pages or updating one's profile, while "liking" political posts afford users a low-cost/low-reward strategy for managing interactions" (p. 106). The analysis of political behavior on Facebook has not considered communities of practice, a primary location of andragogic development.

Hence, this paper considers political education in Facebook groups as nonformal andragogic communities of practice, something lacking in the literature. Through the discussion of who these groups are, what they do, how they differ from other groups, and how they have been educated, these communities are shown to be intellectually sophisticated with communal identities whose complexity exists outside state control within a community of practice.

On Andragogy

Stemming from Knapp's 19th century definition of andragogy as "…methods or techniques used to teach adults…" (Maddalena, 2015, p. 1), andragogy is a term used to differentiate adult learning from pedagogy, the term applying to the learning of children. Knowles (1996) explains that pedagogy is often based on the transfer of knowledge to children. This is unlike adults who are generally self-motivated, having the agency to stop learning as opposed to children mandated to be in schools. Knowles highlights four significant differences between pedagogy and andragogy. First, the learner is self-directed rather than dependant upon the learning environment. Second, there is a "reservoir of experience" (p. 55) that the learner taps into as a learning resource. Third, social roles dictate learning readiness. Fourth, the application of knowledge is much more immediate so the "…orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem-centeredness" (p. 55).

Elias and Merriam (2005) distinguish formal learning contexts such as schools, from informal learning contexts like professional seminars, and nonformal learning contexts like peer-to-peer (P2P) learning. In short, formal learning environments lead to credentials (University education), while informal learning environments do not lead to a credential but use classroom environments and formalized procedures (new employee training/orientation). Nonformal environments do not have formally established procedures; learning occurs incidentally without preparation (asking a colleague for experience). Elias and Merriam found that most adult learning occurs non-formally, outside of formal and informal classrooms, so P2P learning on social media occurs non-formally like most adult learning, without a formalized curriculum. Through the P2P process, the cohesion and identity of a group is reinforced, and the sense of ownership of the learning offered is cemented.

Community of Practice

Facebook groups can be more impactful than many classrooms for political education because they provide a community of practice. Not only do these groups furnish community membership, but also periphery membership. Many members evolve into communities rather than jump into

them. Hoadley (2012) argues access to experts, common identity, and peripheral participation are the key elements of a community of practice. First, experts need to be available for new members to learn from and pose questions to. It is necessary for new participants to possess the desire to enter the process necessary to become experts. Second, in order for a new participant to join the common identity of the community of practice, the aforementioned identity must already exist. These groups certainly have a common identity as communists. Third, participation in the community of practice usually starts on the margins of the community and individuals slowly move towards the center. Hoadley argues that participants "…need to have a space in which it is legitimate to be on the periphery…" (p. 291). Rather than taking a class in a college or university or purchasing a book, members of a Facebook group can dip their proverbial toes in the water, which allows the educational process to take the time the individual needs to approach discovery in learning, and also sample different identities (Dobrowsky, 2012; Du Preez & Lombard, 2014).

The C4P framework (Figure 1) outlines a systematic way in which communist Facebook groups create a community of practice. Through content, conversations, connections, and context, the purpose is established within the community of practice (Hoadley & Kilner, 2005). This model provides the necessary flexibility that a diverse community requires as it facilitates peripheral membership and allows new members to evolve into the community (Hoadley, 2012). Liu et al. (2017) have connected the Spiral of Silence framework to the expression of political opinion on Facebook; periphery membership can allow a group member to ease out of one's reservations and the anonymity of the group, where posts are not publically accessible and can overcome the reticence to express political views. Additionally, amongst diverse educators, Hoadley and Kilner explain the C4P framework conforms to various relational philosophies of education such as behaviorist, developmental, cognitive, and sociocultural learning while rejecting neoliberal models of knowledge transmission. This overcomes barriers to different styles of learning which can be difficult to conquer in formal and informal classroom contexts.

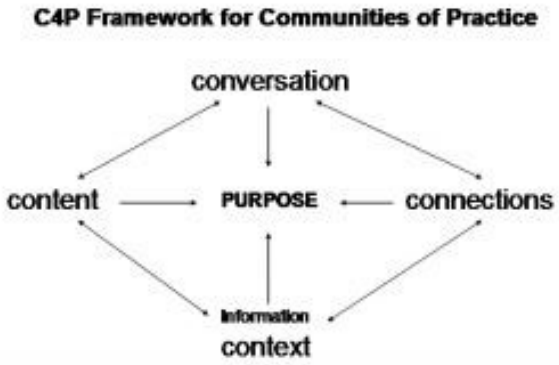

Figure 1. C4P Framework (Hoadley & Kilner, 2005, p. 34)

Hoadley and Kilner (2005) contend that content is attractive to new members of a community of practice because it provides immediate value and implicit socialization. Hoadley (2012) adds that content provides immediate periphery membership through non-committal action, such as articles and guides easily accessible to members on the periphery through the social networking system. The sharing of articles is a primary focus of these Facebook groups.

Hoadley and Kilner (2005) argue that conversation focusing on content builds knowledge, especially in the context of a shared purpose and objective. These conversations establish a culture of safety within the community of practice and allow members to talk through ideas they might not otherwise present. Quality content and conversations build connections which Hoadley and Kilner call "…the lifeblood of a knowledge community" (p. 34). This highlights the deep theoretical and historical discussions within these groups as quality content.

Digital Ethnography

A digital ethnography approach was used for data collection. The researcher embedded himself into several groups on Facebook and developed community membership in these groups. Garcia et al. (2009) describe digital ethnography:

> Observation in online research involves watching text and images on a computer screen rather than watching people in offline settings. However, the technologically mediated environment still provides direct contact with the social world the ethnographer is studying, since participants in that setting communicate through online behavior. (p. 58)

Talip et al. (2017) contend that "nuanced aspects of use" (p. 92) can be gleaned through this inductive method, which allows the researcher to better understand the phenomenon.

Facebook was chosen because of its prevalence of groups, particularly those with a radical Left ideology. Unlike a platform like Twitter, which is more open, closed groups can allow for more radical discussion due to their perceived privacy (Talip et al., 2017, p. 58). Participants' accounts were surveyed to see their professional, geographic, and educational backgrounds.

Due to the sensitive information potentially shared and the potential risk to participants, anonymization was central; therefore, no specific examples have been included from participants as they could potentially be traced back. Rather than simply adhering to an ethics approval and traditional macroethical guidelines, microethical considerations about the "… differences in the perceptions, expectations, values, and goals of all parties must be constantly negotiated in a responsive and contextually-sensitive process" (Tagg et al., 2017, p. 273). Naturally, it would have been more advantageous to the researcher to include more specificity, but ethics did not permit this. While some might consider these ethical measures extreme, Neo-McCarthyism is a real phenomenon (de Pracontal, 2017). No Facebook comment can be anonymized from potential government overreach (Lovett, 2018). Therefore, strict anonymization was the most ethical way to protect participants.

Digital Andragogical Nonformal Educational Communities of Practice

In a digital andragogical nonformal educational community of practice there is a meeting place online comprising of self-motivated adults without any specific learning outcomes as dictated by curriculum in which the participants engage in identity construction around a learning topic. These are online spaces, intended for adults, which do not offer certification, and have highly motivated and curious participants. Members can not only participate at the fringes in the beginning and develop both into a greater knowledge of the subject, but also slowly develop a group identity. They tend to follow Hoadley and Kilner's (2005) C4P model of content, conversations, connections, and context.

In the case of Communist Facebook groups, members are comprised of adults. There are not formal curricular items. Learning is not planned in a curricular sense. Members often start with periphery participation and grow into group membership. This often results in members adopting and expressing a new political identity as communists learning through content, conversations,

connections, and context.

Scope of Investigation

While communism and socialism have often been used interchangeably in History, this paper seeks to consider those who directly identify themselves as communists. To a traditional Marxist definition, socialism has been defined as the conditions and political governance leading to communism, which is an ideal that has never been achieved; this is why states usually have included the word 'socialism,' rather than the word 'communism,' in their names. Communism has been an aspirational goal. However, the term 'socialism' has been used in the discussion of social democracy in Europe, and more recently, democratic socialism in the United States with Bernie Sanders. Communism has a much more closed and radical connotation, and this paper seeks to consider its discussion on social media.

It is essential to note this is a paper considering Education, and is not a work of History or Political Science. While many events in the history of communism can be criticized, the scope of this paper is not to engage these debates; rather, the objective is to bespeak that these considerations are occurring on social media. It is not the goal on this paper to take a liberal view against Marxist-Leninism, nor is it the goal to take a Marxist-Leninist view against liberalism.

It bears repeating that it is necessary to clarify some limitations stemming from ethical boundaries. Specific examples of group members' writings have not been included as their anonymity could not be guaranteed. Images associated with these groups have been found on secondary websites and cited as such. The exact names of groups, participants (including their pseudonyms), and the sources of imagery have been anonymized for their own personal protection. This produces the limitation that the exact quotation of group members is not presented for evidentiary purposes. Therefore, this study tries to present the proverbial broad-strokes while maintaining the anonymity of those who could be targeted for their beliefs.

Who Are They?

Members of Communist groups span the world and so do their sources. Members from South and North America, all parts of Europe, Russia, the Middle East, Africa, India, Australia, and East Asia can be found sharing local and global resources.

Communist Facebook groups are explicit in their support for communism. Their names often include the word "communism" or have a central communist figure in the name like Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Marx, Xi, Deng, etc. They also include different functions like discussion, advocacy, dating, memes, anime, national association, religion, atheism, and other interests. These are all characteristics of Hoadley's (2005) C4P Framework of identity construction through education, tapping into the "reservoir of experience" (p. 55) described by Knowles (1996).

The primary age group is the millennial generation. Media outlets have reported a preference for socialism or communism amongst the millennial generation (Market Watch, 2017; Washington Times, 2017), and Kearney (2016) has documented young adults' penchant for preferring political activity and education on Facebook. Corbet and Gurdgiev (2017) have also made known millennials sinking support for liberal democracy and its institutions. They argue that this is not due to political or electoral outcomes from interference by states like Russia or China; rather, millennials dwindling faith in liberal democracy seeds from the socio-economic imbalance their generation is experiencing vis-à-vis older generations.

Communist groups tend to understand the differences between different types of socialism. Many members are Marxist-Leninist in leaning, but social democrats and Trotskyites also participate. Social democrat and Trotskyite groups also exist. There is a strong debate about the nuanced differences between socialist ideologies, which is not limited to general leanings, but

often supported with primary source writings by major socialist thinkers. The works of Mao, Stalin, Lenin, Trotsky, Marx, Gramsci, Engels, Hoxha, and others are often quoted. Even the nuance between Marxist-Leninism and Marxist-Leninism-Maoism are often seen as common knowledge in these communities.

What Do They Do?

The communist groups participate in sharing various types of information. Support for North Korea and Venezuela often through memes, news articles about communism and anti-imperialism, criticism of different political philosophies including other types of socialism, polls on political leanings, Marxist cartoons, religious debates, and humourous subjects often involving anti-colonial, anti-corporate, anti-capitalist, and pro-Marxist memes.

Communist groups are often authoritarian. In their community standards they often explicitly state members will be banned for liberal and conservative views, unless they are present to learn about communism. Authoritarian communist expressions are also incorporated. Members are not banned but purged. They are not suspended but sent to the Gulag. While in a liberal democracy, terms like 'purge' and 'Gulag' are often reviled, in these communities, they are often revered. These terms express the social-economic justice pined for by millennials that Corbet and Gurdgiev (2017) have elucidated. Stalin's purges are often regarded as criminal justice, and the Gulag providing protection from criminal elements in society.

Clarifying the history of communist states is also a mission of communist Facebook groups. There are several posts about how many deaths for which Stalin and Mao ought to be responsible. There are questions about the veracity of the claim that famine in the Ukrainian genocide or Great Leap Forward were willfully enacted by communist leaders. Not only do they seek to refute claims of tens of millions killed by communism as purported in the Black Book of Communism (Courtois, 2005), members are aware of the claims by Solzhenitsyn of mass murder under communism, and even refute him through his own work (Solzhenitsyn, 2008). Timothy Snyder's Bloodlands (2010), which has much smaller political death counts in the Soviet Union but still in the millions, is criticized as liberal propaganda, much as it has been in socialist circles (Lazare, 2017). Groups also include criticism of larger claims under the Great Leap Forward (Babiarz et al., 2015). The death rate and history behind the so-called Iron Curtain is a debated point within the academy; it is not the mission of this paper to enter into this debate. Rather, communist Facebook groups are aware of the nuances of academic debate on the issue and seek to popularize a pro-communist reading of history.

Communist Facebook groups actively try to defend communism and attack its opponents. Members will participate in praxis by raiding the comments sections of anti-communist posts, some even joining groups opposing communism to agitate and educate. Propaganda against communism will often be posted and then deconstructed and argued against. Often memes against communism are edited into pro-communist propaganda.

These groups do not have formal curricula but engage in content, conversations, connections, and context (C4P). They use primary source materials, build community, and develop context about the history of communism compared with the liberal-democratic philosophy, which dominates politics today. They challenge the legitimacy of liberal-democrat ideology as a natural context, arguing for a context that does not reform liberal-democracy but replaces it. Not only is this a central tenant of Lenin's own writings, members directly quote these tenets from seminal works like State and Revolution or What Is To Be Done? As digital nonformal andragogic educational communities of practice, these are online groups of adults without a curriculum developing a political identity and being educated in a political philosophy through content, conversations, connections, and context.

How Are They Different from Other Facebook Groups?

There is a sharp contrast between the comments in these Facebook groups and the comments on political news stories. When analyzing the comments of a political article on Facebook, comments are generally filled with personal opinion and anecdote, lacking depth and often trailing off-topic (Hille & Bakker, 2014). These comments rarely cite political theory, historical context or referenced material. What separates communist Facebook groups is that, while expressing opinion and anecdote, they also provide political theory, historical context, and referenced material on many occasions. The discourse more resembles a university-level discussion group than a water cooler political conversation.

This stands in stark difference to other political groups such as 'woke' liberal Facebook groups. These groups are mostly filled with articles from the mainstream press, critical of conservative figures like Boris Johnson or Donald Trump. They lack almost any references of political science studied in the Academy. Some have included posts about academics like Jordan Peterson, but they are limited to memes about cleaning one's room, a reference to his popular self-help book 12 Rules for Life (Peterson, 2018). However, there are no references to his peer reviewed work, or Maps of Meaning (Peterson, 1999). The genre seems limited to nonfiction and non-academic referenced material. Furthermore, there are not woke liberal groups citing seminal philosophical works in the history of liberalism like Rousseau's Du contrat social; ou Principes du droit politique or discussion of the Hobbes and Locke debate on human nature from participants without higher education. However, in communist Facebook groups, original works by Marx, Engels, and Lenin are often discussed and cited by those who lack higher education on their profiles. Woke liberal groups do not discuss economic differences between Keynes and Friedman, like a discussion between Dengist and Maoist economics. In short, these liberal groups are not digital nonformal andragogic educational communities of practice. They meet having an existing political identity; while sharing mainstream press news articles can be informative, it is not education with material also used in university education, building identity and complex knowledge through content, conversations, connections, and context.

Community identity and level of academic debate separate communist Facebook groups from other communities on Facebook. There are several philosophy groups on Facebook which have a high level of academic discussion. Profile analysis often reveals a formal education in the Humanities, and commonly Philosophy itself as a university major in these philosophy groups. While the debate is sophisticated, there does not seem to be the same community membership or identity construction to being 'a philosopher' that being 'a communist' constructs. Kearney (2016) has argued that political participation on Facebook has more connection to interpersonal goals than most other behaviors. Simply put, arguing the tenets of Marxist-Leninism is often more connected to identity than debating Kant's rationalism versus Hegel's dialectic. Conversely, right-wing Facebook groups have a strong attachment to identity, but the cultivation of academic debate in pro-Trump, New Right, Alt-Right, Neo-fascist, etc. circles can be lacking. Authoritarian Populism has never been much for quoting the academy (Hall, 1988).

How Have They Been Educated?

When personal profiles are analyzed, most individual group members do not have academic backgrounds in relation to fields like history or political science. Although some group members have higher education, it is varied amongst several fields, and many do not have higher education. Simply put, these are not groups of history and political science majors bantering about their university studies. Many of these members are employed in service professions like cooking and serving, or they are unemployed. There are certified professionals in their ranks as well.

It appears that group members have obtained political and historical knowledge in a nonformal tting. Elias and Merriam (2005) distinguish formal learning contexts such as schools,

from informal learning contexts like professional seminars and from nonformal learning contexts like peer-to-peer learning. They found that most workplace learning occurs non-formally, outside of formal and informal classrooms. This would suggest Facebook groups can work similarly to workplace education or so-called 'on the job training.' Keles (2018) has connected the Community of Inquiry framework to teaching presence in Facebook groups. He found that "… FB's [Facebook's] social network supported a teaching presence for both the instructors and the students and enabled them to share responsibility for the teaching process" (p. 203). Communist Facebook groups are working through a symbiotic and syncretic knowledge dissemination network which allows members to be both teacher and student inside of the community of practice. With so many genres of communist orientation being debated, those on the periphery are free to experiment and taste the menu of Maoist, Trotskyist, Stalinist, Hoxhaist, Dengist, etc. ideology and syncretically form their own unique belief systems in much the same modern spirituality will take from several religions.

The groups use memes to educate both simple and complex Marxist principles. For example, Figure 2 shows a straightforward graphic displaying Marx's argument of wage theft. It then juxtaposes wage theft against capitalist or libertarian logic towards surplus value. There are also complex analyses of Marxist history and theory, especially posts of videos by the YouTube contributor The Finnish Bolshevik (2015), one such video detailing issues with the controversial testament of Lenin, which renounced Stalin. There is the reading of scholarship about Stalin from researchers like Kotkin (2014) and Žižek (2017), and social media presentations of criticism of their work (The Finnish Bolshevik, 2016). Again, there is a divided scholarship on these issues (David-Fox, 2016), but the point is that communist Facebook groups are educational spaces that explain both simple and complex political ideas. There is a conversation about this content, which is contextualized by its supporters' building connections in the community, which then brings those in periphery participation closer to the center of the ideology – the C4P framework.

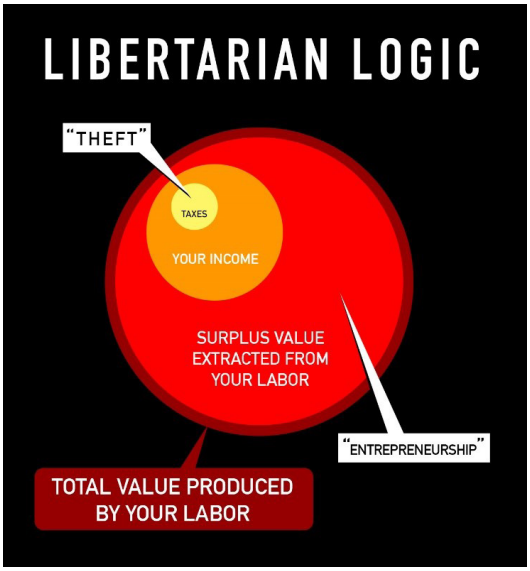

Figure 2. Libertarian Logic (Bemky, n.d.)

The Political Compass

The political compass is a tool used in political science to map political belief in four quadrants. The traditional left wing to right wing analysis is placed on the x-axis, while authoritarianism is juxtaposed with libertarianism. These four orientations create a map in which

one can parse the differences between the authoritarian Left and Right, and the libertarian Left and Right (Figure 3). The purpose is to provide two dimensions to the traditional one dimension of Left versus Right analysis, but it is still only two-dimensional and other political science models provide much deeper analysis. The political compass is not without criticism in academic circles (Cole, 1995), but it is a noticeable development that an academic quadrant political plotting tool appears within a social media group.

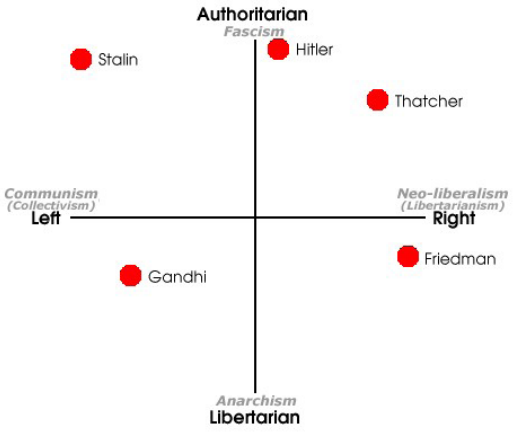

Figure 3. Political Compass (Political compass team, 2017)

The political compass is used seriously and humorously. Popular culture references, like referencing Game of Thrones (Figure 4), is a common theme in its use. Some members will post a variety of historical figures and then debate over where they actually belong; Figure 4 is an example of this, which included long debate over various figures. Figure 5 is not presented as an empirical historical example of where these characters would really lie on the political compass; rather, it is an example of how debate and education through the political compass and memes using the political compass is present in these communist Facebook groups. The appearance of this depth of political analysis, and play with this analysis, is a part of the C4P model. Liberal groups could be displaying this level of analysis, but are instead sharing press articles. Conservative groups are much the same. Communist Facebook groups develop a general higher level of political education for adults.

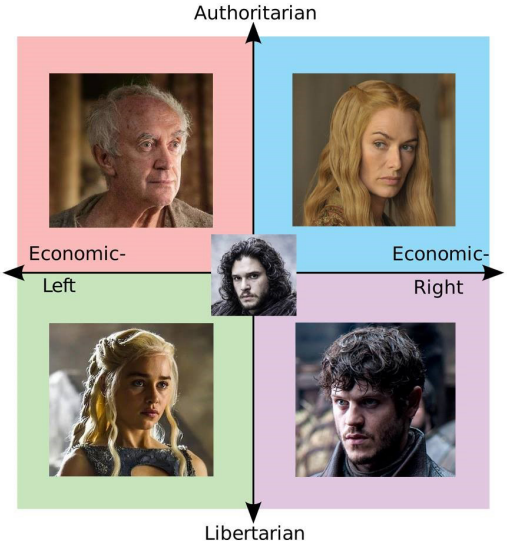

Figure 4. Game of Thrones Political Compass (Party9999999, n.d.)

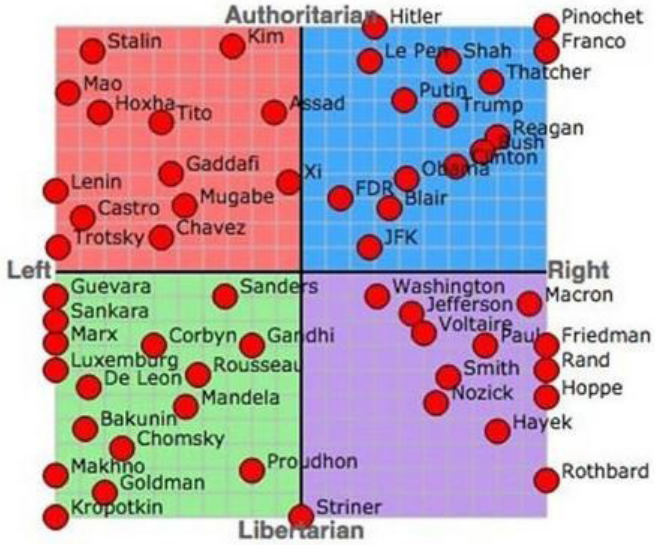

Figure 5. Historical Characters on the Political Compass (Tee, 2017)

Outside of State Control

The state has historically had control of political education through the educational system and the media to a large degree. Bourdieu (1984) has argued that control over the educational system equates to control of the state. States have had to approve curricula and media outlets have historically had to exist within the basic confines of popular taste, often confined by the curriculum presented by the state, allowing vigorous debate, but within well-defined ideological boundaries (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Political education through social media changes this norm. Market forces are not required as hosting a political group on Facebook has no cost, while historically printing newspapers, starting television channels, and hiring journalists has been

an expensive proposition. Additionally, Dobrowsky (2012) has revealed how identities can be sampled on Facebook in a way that has not previously existed in human history by taking the power of identity construction away from traditional institutions of school, family, and other associations, which allows individuals to shape their own identities. In communist Facebook groups, this appears to be occurring through the C4P framework.

Groups on Facebook allow users to sidestep algorithms. Brake (2017) has shown the influence algorithms have on affecting what journalistic reports appear in social media, including Facebook. In the United States, National Public Radio has reported that Facebook has adapted its algorithm to favor groups in Facebook timelines (Shahini, 2017). Being in a Facebook group makes it more likely to receive information from the group than simply 'liking' a page on Facebook which means group members are more likely to get a news story or other link in their newsfeed from another group member than from standard journalistic news websites. While these members are divided into a variety of groups, Ferrara (2012) reports that on Facebook, "…people tend to aggregate principally in a large number of small communities instead of in very large communities" (p. 13), but despite this, the structure of communities stays the same amongst groups, and this structure can even be detected quantifiably.

Conclusion

In a broad fashion, Facebook groups can be seen as communities of practice when providing knowledge dissemination and community membership. It is important to differentiate that some knowledge dissemination does not provide identity-defining community membership and some community membership does not provide a substantial-quality of knowledge dissemination. Communist Facebook groups are one such environ in which identity-defining community membership, practice through such a community, and substantial quality of knowledge are combined in a non-formal context.

Researchers ought to consider in greater detail communities of practice working on social media in the nonformal context. While formal and informal contexts continue to be important, most adult learning occurs non-formally. Therefore, if academia wishes to understand the development of political education in the 21st century, or the progression of any learning in any field, the functioning of non-formal andragogical communities of practice on social media is essential to understanding the field of Education in its modern context.

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