Marxism and Education

THE ALIENATED ACADEMIC

The Struggle for Autonomy Inside the University

RICHARD HALL

Marxism and Education

Series Editor
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"This book is a Marxist tour de force in the analysis of higher education, a field subsumed under the imperative of accumulation and self-valorization of capital. Hall's illuminating and erudite intervention invites us to a walk on the political path that goes in, against and beyond the capitalist university. The humanist approach to academic alienation that guides reflections in the book stripes any fetishistic appearances off the reality of academic labour so that a foundation for solidarity across struggles is laid out against the precarization, acceleration, competition, exploitation and atomization constituting the capitalist reality at large. Unlike other recent Marxist works in the field of education, Alienated Academic is a systematic proposition, an organic whole that integrates rigorous critique with political passion, methodological creativity with communist imagination, quasi-universalism with decolonial sensitivity. This timely scholarly work is a resolute answer to the capitalist misery that has gripped the academy, and Hall convincingly explains that the only way to break the vicious cycle of alienation is to mobilize our forces of intellect and creativity in mass rebellion against capital. The kingdom of (not only academic) freedom and autonomy starts just round the corner of our indignation!"
—Dr Krystian Szadkowski, *Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland*

"There have been many attempts to heal the diseased Westernized university. Movements to reimagine, reclaim, occupy and decolonise higher education are in full swing around the world; new fields of critique and resistance have emerged to advance them. Yet change is slow and we wonder why. The Alienated Academic makes a bold intervention into this debate by pulling the veil back from the privileged promise of academic life to reveal its festering infection. The crisis of the modern university, Hall argues, harbours in the very nature of academic labour itself: alienation. Guiding us through a compelling Marxist analysis, he shows not only how being-academic reproduces 'flows of oppression and domination' in capitalist society – leading to separation, injustice and 'Weltschmerz' – but how 'waking up' to the non-necessity of alienation creates possibilities for abolishing knowledge-as-labour and rediscovering ourselves, each other and the untested feasibilities of learning in common. This incisive critique lays ground for an 'alternative political economy for intellectual activities' and, more than ever, Hall models revolutionary knowledge by making it."
—Dr Sarah Amsler, *University of Nottingham, UK*

This series assumes the ongoing relevance of Marx's contributions to critical social analysis and aims to encourage continuation of the development of the legacy of Marxist traditions in and for education. The remit for the substantive focus of scholarship and analysis appearing in the series extends from the global to the local in relation to dynamics of capitalism and encompasses historical and contemporary developments in political economy of education as well as forms of critique and resistances to capitalist social relations. The series announces a new beginning and proceeds in a spirit of openness and dialogue within and between Marxism and education, and between Marxism and its various critics. The essential feature of the work of the series is that Marxism and Marxist frameworks are to be taken seriously, not as formulaic knowledge and unassailable methodology but critically as inspirational resources for renewal of research and understanding, and as support for action in and upon structures and processes of education and their relations to society. The series is dedicated to the realization of positive human potentialities as education and thus, with Marx, to our education as educators.

More information about this series at
http://www.palgrave.com/gp/series/14811

"A brilliant critique of the academic's number one fetish: their own world-historical importance, its role in their enslavement to a work ethic built on alienation, and their participation in wider flows of capitalist destruction. Though many in the academy may think otherwise: another world is not possible, at least not a world that issues from the labour of the current academic, however radically inclined."

—Dr Ansgar Allen, *University of Sheffield, UK*

"The Alienated Academic presents its analysis and critique of higher education with clarity and confidence. Its conclusion are drawn firmly from both evidence and the lived experience. The conclusions it comes to – of self-evaluation and analysis as well as resistance – are challenging but the hope it offers, of an autonomy and eventual freedom, are skilfully argued and worth striving for."

—Dr Nick Allsopp, *Assistant Director of Academic Practice, Loughborough University, UK*

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This book is dedicated to Jo, Elsie and Tracey.
For holding the light, whilst I found my way.

Marxism and Education
Series Editor's Foreword

> I do not know with what weapons the next war will be fought, but I know that the one after that will be fought with sticks and stones. (Albert Einstein 1949)

> Someone once said that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism. (Jameson 2003)

Writing, during May 2018, at the bicentenary of Marx's birth, the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Das Kapital* and half-century since *1968* the year of 'events' (not least *Paris*, May and the *Tet offensive*, January–September), it remains clear both, that the dire ramifications of Einstein's prediction and the enigmatic challenges of Jameson's observations, are unavoidable while realistic pursuit of progressive democratic empowerment is as complex and as necessary as ever. And, engaging with the contributions of Marx and Engels for understanding our unfolding present *as systemic* social realities is as imperative as ever, too.

These times are interesting, frightening perhaps, and Marx's theme that *all that is solid melts into air* (Marx and Engels 1848) remains apt with global digitalised finance capitalism moving into full throttle, undeterred by modifications emergent in innumerable social, cultural and political structures and processes of drag and inertia. Simultaneously, uncertainty reasserts itself in variable and uneven non-linear economic

development and while significant sections of populations are being lifted out of poverty and marking economic growth, not least, relatively, across China, for most working people in the West (particularly USA, Europe and UK) incomes continue to barely flat-line or worse, despite a continual stream of pathetic confidence enhancing official messages to the contrary.[1] Thus while global wealth and income inequality has been growing steadily, there is little real prospect of remission from austerity for the chronic condition of in-work poverty, and the un-and under-employed. In the meantime, corporate philanthropy is as lucrative a growth industry as ever for the expanding and reinforcing the powers of the capitalist class (Bloom and Rhodes 2018).

Looking in almost any direction moments in crisis emerge. Ecological fragility is increasingly evident; integrity of scientific and professional expertise radically challenged; resurgent bleak undersides to democracy increasingly in play and fascism lurks masquerading as populist democratic empowerment. Brilliant inventive products of digital communications technologies too are themselves unreliable on many fronts, expressing negativities of *fake news*, alternative facts and disinformation. They provide myriad opportunities for rigging institutionalised 'democratic representation' to the perpetual benefit of elite class power (national, international and global), underpinned and legitimated in complex ambiguity and supported by emergent enterprises of formal legality often underpinned by threats and realities of raw force. Ambiguous too, are beneficial implications for innovative productive working practices associated with AI technology and the makings of the Fourth Industrial Revolution that promises much for capitalisation while threatening to displace generations of skilled workers. Accuracy, honesty and integrity in civil society frequently appear to be in short supply for professional regulative services such as accounting, auditing and law, while journalistic practices are often compromised. Social media, excellent for critical network formation and coordinated political movement nevertheless provide generous spaces too for trolling and individualised terrorism of identity assault as well as capacity for oppressive surveillance, both public and private. Online digital networks are blurring institutional boundaries

[1] See for details: *World Inequality Report 2018, available at:* http://wir2018.wid.world/

while the reach of national state authorities' capacity both to maintain security is eroded and intermittently giving full play to transgression in media spectacles, accompanied by public health warnings that viewers may find them 'disturbing'. So much serves to corrode trust in established authorities of civil society as evidenced in ineffective lethal weapons regulation, notably across the US where it is accompanied by the chilling absurdity of suggestions for arming education workers for the protection of their students. The Brexit saga in Europe is unsettling long-standing international alliances and the EU itself as an ongoing experiment in shared sovereignty. Continual resurgence of 'cold' and evident hot wars, with attendant humanitarian crises of population displacements and relentless evidence of numerous other brutalities of famine and disease signalling that the middle is indeed fragile. Realpolitik is as callous as ever and protectionist international trade warfare is in the mix, too. And all these combine as interconnecting contexts expressive of the political *new normal*, perhaps, slipping further once again into authoritarian gear while geo-political tectonic plates shift. Neo-con Pax Americana is re-emergent, enlarging its scope of *manifest destiny in re-newel* while maximising its globalist Monroe Doctrine, and *hubris* in *America first* military, financial and economic power. Plus, the most powerful man alive, the President of the US, apparently devoid of moral compass beyond his own will-to-power, whilst sitting atop the mightiest industrial-financial-military complex so far devised and claiming the moral high ground, too, appears to have no consistent grasp of the real, or interest in civilised debate much beyond that of reality TV and news streaming.[2] And, a penchant for populist spectacles, chaotic political theatre and bullying beamed across rightist media channels to reassure his constituency of his personal success in making 'America great again'. Thus, Trumpian megalomania: *We are not going to apologize for America. We are going to stand up for America. No more apologies* (Leonor 2018). At the same time corporate America experiences reassurance of Trump's loyalty in the material realities of an

[2] On Trumpian real/delusional phenomena dynamics as simultaneously both expert commentary, popular entertainment and expression of crisis: *'The Dangerous Case Of Donald Trump': 27 Psychiatrists Assess | The Last Word | MSNBC* available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nhoGIvOKJU&app=desktop, and *President Donald Trump's Mental State An 'Enormous Present Danger' | The Last Word |* available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0J00qjO2xgE&app=desktop

increasingly favourable tax environment while the left behind slip further behind. Barbarism's perfect storm looms.

Nevertheless, as systems of governance shudder we experience exuberant capital's exhilarating and disturbing hegemony at all levels of the real as we know, feel, inadvertently practice, renew and transform 'it'. History, far from ending is thus in the making in what might be seen as the renewal of resistances and struggles in and against the politics of winner-takes-all conducted through authoritarian demagoguery in a world changing through kleptocratic forms, and the accompanying leverage of fear, with real and symbolic violence at every turn. Thus, the increasingly complex contemporary game that is the faux neo-liberalising of the social, most if not all the cards, whether diplomatic, political, cultural and/or institutional appear to be tossed into that air. It has been long in the coming in the US, at least as far back as the mid-1950s then marked by progressive breakthroughs in civil rights with *Brown vs the Board of Education* decision for desegregated education. Reactionary elements have gathered forces and been growing in strength by stealth and determination, not least in higher education and its relations to government (MacLean 2017; Wongsam 2018). The rules are changing and existential issues abound. What and who will survive this carnival of creative destruction? Can the end of capitalism now be effectively *imagined*? Or, will the episode we are currently living within succeed in shifting capitalism's demise even further from the *imaginable* while the end of the world becomes ever more imaginably nigh? Apocalyptic … maybe.

These broad themes and more, expressed inevitably in superficial generalities with multiply rhetorical, hyperbolic over-and undertones require detailed contextualisation and critical reflexive practices for contemporary critique of political economy to be rendered as necessarily 'educative' at every performative turn in face of the developing crisis. This is importantly so if we are to address the ongoing economic crisis of the *value* in classical terms, the problematics of Smith, Ricardo and Marx. And, while doing so indicating at each moment the granular material realities and oppositional potential of the *collective* in value creation and struggle in and against the ideological narratives of its social and cultural distribution (Mazzucato 2015, Mazzucato 2018; Roberts 2018). In this context, our *Foreword* welcomes Richard Hall's book to the Marxism and Education

Series against an array of background 'surface appearances' replete with complexities in uncertainly about *What is to be done? The Alienated Academic* (TAA hereafter) focuses on what Hall in timely fashion calls 'the crisis of academic life'. It sits well with the Series' mission to demonstrate the ongoing relevance of Marx's contributions to our potential well-being in breaking loose from reductionist or mechanistic modes of economic foundational, non-dialectical conceptions of social change, and to address the analytics of 'progress' through contemporary re-contextualised Marxist critique of political economy. This book is just one of many items in the continuing resurgence of interest in Marx and Marxism (see Bhattacharya 2017; Saito 2017; Webber 2017). Two moments may be mentioned to mark, appreciate and reflect upon this phenomenon as *Marxist educator activists*, or indeed, as critics thereof. One, it is telling perhaps, that the term *capitalism* and its *alternatives* are now openly and unselfconsciously rendered remarkable and seriously debated across popular media in ways not possible for a very long time. Two, that Karl Marx, the real person and historical figure, and *Capital,* the most significant of his texts, are depicted in a variety of popular forms, including theatre and radio and cinema, too.[2] For instance, in the recent play *Young Marx,* Marx's character suggests that the title of his forthcoming magnum opus now known as *Capital*, should be 'Das Volkswirtschaft Schiesse', celebrating in rough translation both capitalism as '*Economic Worthless Shit'* and Marx's glorious wit and vulgarity, too. Framed as fleeting moments in popular ideology critique, these are *educative* forms in left materialist push-back with potential for action too, performative in and against capitalism's malign powers. And, of course, as such they are at the same time both puny in their immediate effects and inadvertently *expressions of* those mighty and insidious powers. And, they are indicative too, as glimpses of Marx's healthy legacy, its fecundity and his resurgent intellectual stardom, a reputation much maligned but re-consolidating once more, as arguably (and tentatively, of course) the most significant *social scientist* … ever.[3]

[3] *Young Marx* a play by Richard Bean and Clive Coleman performed at the Bridge Theatre, London, December 2017; plus, the political bio-pic with similar title, *The Young Karl Marx* (*Le jeune Karl Marx*) directed by Haitian filmmaker and political activist Raoul Peck and co-written by him and Pascal Bonitzer, screened at the Berlin Film Festival, February 2017; note too, Sarah Woods' *Das*

TAA builds on and with Marxian critical inquiry for emancipator solidarity. It is committed to openness and dialogue in Marxist scholarship, empirical research and their mutuality put to humanitarian uses that the Series represents. It focuses beyond and contextualises surface *appearances* and immediate *feelings*, while assuming historical specificity of dynamic temporality. Necessarily, appearances and feelings are taken as *real* features of the social realm to be considered seriously as both *evidence* of and as *topics* in methodologically integrative scientific-with-complementary-philosophical enquiry for action. And, as such, they are constitutive of forms of materialist analysis for transformative practices to support our Series mission in arenas of struggle. With Marx, the book is dedicated to realising the possibilities of positive human potentialities and, to our education as educators in mutuality striving contra reified abstraction and speculative exploitation lurking insistently in the metabolic machinery of the capitalist mode of economic production, where dead and imaginary forms constrain the living real lives of so many working people. The Series operates from the perspective that Marx's work can and should inspire construction and renewal of complex historical materialist critique. In practice its authors (of book length monographs and editors of collections of multiply- and single-authored chapters) aim to be both critical *of* and in aspiration *critical to* moments and systemic forms of transformative interaction across all relational levels and dimensions of the social in support of *deliberative educational practice,* thus to making a positive difference. In Hall's case contributing despite and because of *alienation* in the working life of the university, and developing a focus replete with heuristic potential.

Hall provides critical tools for addressing 'social needs' on the understanding that they are both objective and never radically separable from political, economic and financial structures. These intellectual *devices* are

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Kapital, BBC Radio Four, May 2018. Plus, the BBC documentary, featuring Karl Marx in their *Masters of Money Series, 2016,* available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IyrhoHtSkzg; and Deutsche Welle 2018 production: *Who was Karl Marx?* available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FaOKNpAiIM. For activist contra-academic-alienation-as-performance see Richard D Wolff on 'alienation' in '*Global Capitalism: Linking Trump and Marx*', available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUGpApcvGiU&app=desktop; and in even more popular *performative* vein see *Bill Maher Makes Direct Appeal to 'Dear Friend' Roseanne on Her Support for Trump*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mSSwera76A&app=desktop#fauxfullscreen

productive for exposing and explaining vested interests in and around capital that are expansively commodifying everything, including social needs themselves *as objects of profitability*, and not least perhaps, doing so in the writing and reading of this text, too. In Marxist terms, innumerable social toxicities and contradictions are brought to light exposing relentless and unsustainable cumulative division of the world into antagonistic, though ever more complex multi-layered class formations in tension with *potential in being* for consolidating the *many* against the *few*, expressing in abstraction the emergent antagonism of the *99%* and the *1%*.

In Marxist critical synthesis Hall brings to our attention crucial dynamic features of realities undergirding structural relational patterning of university life as living production. Hall does this provocatively reworking the Marxian organising theme of *alienation,* in recognition of constitutive intensification of estrangement in and around academic workers' relations of production. The aim is to shed light on and to theorise what he calls 'a circuit of alienation' in respect of 'the crisis of academic work'. Faithful to dialectical praxis, Hall shows how alienation both *articulates* (expresses) and articulates *with* (interconnects) wider dynamic structural forms. The analysis points to structurational contexts of repression and collaborative resistive transformative potential, including for those struggling against impoverishment and precarity, not least amongst university workers themselves. Hall's approach is a theoretically and methodologically ambitious synthesis providing generative energy for activist collective de-commodified intellectuality, while necessarily recognising huge challenges for progressive transformation of academic alienation. These challenges in turn constitute opportunities for situated critical action and transformation contra negativities of established social and cultural divisions. Such *praxis* applies, not least of course, to fundamental ramifications of *mental* and *manual* labour, the site of longstanding abstractions and social dichotomisation practices of knowledge production, distributions and their relations to advanced teaching and learning.

Thus, TAA is a comrade and critical friend in struggle for the task of realising historical materialist practices representative of contemporary productive resonances of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* especially Thesis One: on *objective contemplation*; Three: on *educating the educators*, Eleven: on *interpretation of and changing the world* as they play out ramifications

across the whole of Marx's work (Marx 1845). Hall's monograph stands firm in rejecting specious characterisation in dichotomised *epistemological break*; namely hermetic boundary formation around immature *idealist early epistemic forms* versus the *later* fully-formed *scientific* Marx (Althusser 2005). He provides working outlines, necessarily incomplete, of emergent analytic totality in formation reflecting *continuities* in Marxian critical challenges in realist dialectical forms. In these respects, too, Hall's approach flows in synthesis with enhanced appreciation of open Marxian humanistic modes running counter to misanthropic memes and tropes while reasserting activist potential in descriptive and explanatory narratives of *hope trumping hate to counter the violence of separation*.

There is much on offer and much to fight for arising from critique of contemporary political economy where *negating the negative* must actively build with, through and upon de-alienation for each person as much as for all. Here dialectically too of course, this book takes its place in corporate capitalist production. It is *a commodity* in the academic publishing industry as capitalisation, and itself a complementary token in exchange value realisation in academic career productivity and enhancement for 'adding value' in the labour market of advanced knowledge, skills and academic reputational élan. As ever, the law of value operates, capital begets capital … money makes money. And, as an emergent historical product in each respect, this work builds upon innumerable flows of socially necessary labour time, quantitatively abstracted and accumulated as *labour power* expressed in qualitative separation, available for market mechanisms to mobilise in *exchange value generation* in each case beneficial to that which holds title to the means of production, and its property in outputs with profit, surplus value for expansive reinvestment for productive growth and/or for rentier recirculation of financialised class power reproduction and expansion in support of the apex of the system.

In the processes of academic capitalism there is no escape into pristine innocence for anyone, including senior university workers as esteemed authors subject to what Hall terms the 'iron law of competition, reinforced through global academic labour arbitrage, research and teaching metrics, and performance management'. Nevertheless, *use-values* emerge through engagement with this text for critical praxis, immanent resources for analysis, critical discussion, understanding for re-thinking and acting

within and against the always already highly differentiated and unequal system of consolidation of dominant class benefits in and around higher education and the social horizons beyond. In these terms Hall's project has complementary potential aplenty with momentum for socialist action as *organic intellectual* practices for critique *and* resistance flowing ever more widely *from below* (Gramsci 1971). With Marx and Gramsci, too then, this work demonstrates the emancipatory potential in capitalism's most potent resource and its *Achilles Heel*, namely thoughtful, reflexive human *labour* and its possibilities for generating collective organised will for humane progress in which each aspect of capital's *vulgar economy* (Marx 1867/1976, fn 34, pp. 174–5) must be critiqued and resisted to demonstrate capital's incoherence and it's inequities exposed, while simultaneously realising ourselves in grounded strategic action emergent in possibilities for changes systematically understood. Indeed, this is no less intensely the case under contemporary conditions of *immaterial labour* than earlier dominant production and capital appropriation processes (Aufheben 2006).

TAA then, contributes to ongoing streams of energy in the university sector that are key sites of struggle and contestation. Here alienated academia may be exposed as playing a vital role in capitalisation, as complementary arena and partial basis for appropriation of privatised property necessary for keeping the story of expansion of capital itself alive. Thus academic products expressive of groundbreaking advanced scientific and technical acumen are routinely formed, privatised and weaponised for deployment *against the commons*, the 'public', the demos from whence their value flows. Dominant class strategy and tactics of struggle is highlighted in its successful action from above, for instance implicating the roles of science and advanced learning where their products are to be exposed as profitable for repression in complex capitalisation. A spectacular illustration today perhaps, is the Cambridge Analytica scandal demonstrating the malign potential of sophisticated big data depth analysis enabled in free appropriation and privatisation of individual information, provided most often inadvertently in the *digitalised phoney commons*. Open democracy is thus crippled in service of myriad moments of capitalised empowerment built upon advanced learning. Exposing and connecting them to demonstrate the undergirding mechanisms for realising

elite ruling class interests articulating authoritarian capitalist reinforcement by appropriating academia in it most sophisticated action. These powers deploy ground breaking knowledge and technology, and considerable finance capital for re-fuelling itself systemically, by stealthy subterfuge, with mechanisms of unreliable informed consent along and with ready resort to modes of legality available only to the already economically extremely well placed. Furthermore, the fact that Cambridge Analytica, for instance, has been exposed by disciplined investigative journalism and wound up should not be a cause for unrestrained celebration by democratic forces from below. As a capitalist cultural commodity in its own right, the scandal itself was a good show while it lasted. There is every opportunity for similar material effects being resurrected with guile and wit and then recycled and re-legitimated under alternative names to both achieve similar elite class empowerment outcomes while maximising ambiguity and seemingly demonstrating that democratic social progress, accountability and justice are being re-assured.

Hall's work takes its place in the Series, and contributes therefore to renewing dialogue in Marxism by reframing and integrating for this time the highly debated, *not least amongst Marxists,* efficacy of contributions of the Marxian oeuvre concerning capital's potential for commodification of everything and related ramification for crises and emergent existential tendencies (Dellheim and Wolf 2018; Fanelli and Schmidt 2017). Not least, too, in these regards TAA makes critical due recognition of, while integrating key Marxian themes, such as *labour theory of value,* accumulated *socially necessary labour time* and related inevitability of *political crises of profitability*, emergent structurally across the dynamics of *use-value generation for exchange-value* and *surplus*-value realisation. Thus the approach demonstrates capital's relentless systematic exploitation on each social, cultural and institutional level in search of profit while articulating and binding it in tension and potential crucial contradictions up to and including the global scale. And, with this Series in critical complementary turn, TAA recognises how these are expressed in phenomena of lived realities, too. They are involves in day-to-day regulation of 'social necessity' in cultural and historical specificity of granular accumulation of moments, events formative of *socially necessary labour time* available for realising capitalist monetary exchange value. Thus, by interconnecting turns, constitutive of emergent consolidation of *both* class forms *and*,

highly debated within Marxism, of potential political and economic crises of profitability (Rasmus 2015; Roberts 2016).

In classical Marxian parlance, therefore, *spectral forms* inevitably continue to assemble and haunt the global capitalist system with its landscapes of contradiction and emergent crises. They offer living sites for potential in collective deliberation for articulating action and for transformative class struggling (Marx and Engels 1848). In higher education such critical progressive spectral elements are confronted at every turn by vast horizons of cultural paraphernalia of reassuring rituals of complacent conservative valorisation with elite status realisation, symbolic legitimacy construction, as well as obfuscating appearances of creative freedoms of expression, speech and equality of access, not least around 'academic freedom'. Each singly and in concert, are essential *features in class contestation* while simultaneously recognised critically as esteemed, yet fragile and ambiguous moments in repressive tolerance (Marcuse 1965). In the case of Hall's work what might be termed 'privileges' of academic life are played out as the life-world career imperatives of self-promotional commodity forms. Critical social energy thus expresses itself across shimmering surface realities of repression-cum-liberation. Stress and burn-out marked in proletarianised *busyness,* is the lived-world of much of this *business* for staff scholars, students and researchers alike. In all these regards TAA provides inspiration, with heuristic supports in conceptual and theoretical frameworks, robust tools for analysis, description plus demystification and emergent materialist critique.

So, welcome dear reader, possibly yourself identifying as an *alienated academic* worker, or alternatively wondering what the fuss is about. Our times are challenging, by turns abject misery is in full view beyond the college gate, often within academic precincts, too, alongside ideational and practically engaging real promise with so much that is evidence of potential for abundance and human fulfilment. Being forced to take refuge from disaster is not far away in the daily lived experiences of so many of our fellow beings. Read on critically, reflexively and consider these appearances of our febrile times and their underlying social realities, plus the always already possibilities that, with Richard Hall, following Marx and Engels, Gramsci, too (Gramsci 1971), that here are pointers for working locally in concert to identify collective acts in resistance while preparing for and realising in practice transformative elaborative actions

on broader scales for our own 21st Century socialism. These actions require building *critically* with and upon Marxian problematics, acknowledging with him that social change can never be a matter of will alone, it requires analysis and contextualisation to recognise opportunities and constraints for action with respect, not just to 'economic' forms but their complex dynamics with *relative autonomies* too, in respect of social, political and cultural interconnections as resources. Our contexts demand recognition of real historical developments and determined organisation to build and sustain workers movements and democracy in production, not least to reverse the damaging attrition of the powers of labour organisations experienced since the 1980's neo-liberal turn. Attention to use-value creation must be mindful of the fact that it is only possible for capitalism to grow in exchange-value and expand *profitability* through human social relations of which it is itself an historical emergent. And, it is only possible for capital's malign realities to be resisted in concerted action contra transcendent alienating forms of abstraction with all manner of negative differentiation, too, *through reconstructive emergent effects of collaborative human social relations*. Collective solidarity and transformative struggle are of the same coinage. We may recall with Berthold Brecht reflecting on prospects for communism:

> …it is the simple thing … so hard to achieve
> (Brecht 1932)
> And, in the spirit of Paris, '68:
> Be realistic … demand the impossible!

It is Marx's bicentennial birthday year … with Richard Hall's book as inspiration let's celebrate, not to make an icon or monument of Karl Marx, nor sanctify in memorialising but determined with Marx in aspiration and re-energised material practices to *force the frozen circumstances to dance by playing to them their own melody* (Marx 1844), transforming the world of capitalist relations now, in our time to realise their humane socialist potentialities … and beyond, for tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, too!

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Anthony Green

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Foreword

This book is a landmark work in political economy which applies Marx's concept of alienation to the marketisation and corporatisation of higher education. Over the last thirty years, we have seen the progressive subsumption under capital of universities, and Richard Hall shows in great detail just what the effects of this have been on academic work and academic identities.

Primarily, the result has been alienation. Academics are no longer free to follow their own curiosity-driven trajectory of research. Instead, their labours are constrained by the need to fulfil shifting targets, and in the most countries in the west, they are judged primarily by the research funding they attract. Hall applies Marxist analysis to the university where all labour is quantified and exploited for the extraction of profit. Precarity has risen as universities prefer to structure their course offerings according to the uncertainties of student numbers rather than prioritising the curation of knowledge production. Academics must respond by constantly reinventing themselves as well as recalibrating their productivity, which is judged entirely by arbitrary and externally imposed metrics. The output of those in the 'academic peloton' is compared to the productivity of the most driven and unencumbered workers leading to a profession suffused by Weltschmerz within a 'toxic system of production'. The mental and physical health of many among academic workforce is in decline.

Despite this, there has been relatively little discussion of this crisis since silence is coerced by threats of dismissal. Even student learning is observed and quantified by 'learning analytics' with a consequent rise in their experience of anxiety and depression. In this atmosphere of negligent omerta, Hall chides academics for their slowness to act on their indignation.

Proletarianisation, characterised by overwork, insecurity and exploitation, has spread throughout academia undermining the essential nature of academic labour. Knowledge itself is distorted when entirely judged by its supposed economic value. In this context, science and engineering are now more highly valued than the humanities or social sciences.

However, there are alternatives and trends which can lead back to academic autonomy. Hall discusses the rise of open access scholarship and cooperative education, and how academics can learn the lessons of resistance to managerialism and capitalism from projects of decolonisation around the world. Hall shows how mass intellectuality as critique (the subject of another one of his works) is liberated when we can learn from other marginalised and oppressed peoples. This work makes a thorough and convincing case for the relevance of Marxist theory to the understanding of our own conditions of work in the academy.

York St John University, York, UK Liz Morrish

Acknowledgements

This book reflects my work inside and outside the University over the course of the last decade. In this time, we have witnessed the re-engineering and repurposing of higher education, and the impact this has had on academics, professional services staff and students. In part this catalysed my engagement in a range of protests and occupations in 2010–11, alongside my work in co-operatives like the Social Science Centre in Lincoln and Leicester Vaughan College, and with the Open Library of Humanities. This stitches my thinking and my practice into other co-operative movements for dignity, and against the indignity of capitalist work.

However, my thinking and my practice have also been challenged personally, through a decade-long commitment to therapy. On one level, this work represents my attempt to understand and manage manifestations of depression and anxiety, including their displacement or appearance as overwork. On a deeper level, it has been fundamental in enabling me to understand my own essence, in terms of how and why I have, at times, been estranged from myself and the world. This book encapsulates a moment and a movement in my recovery of myself in the world.

In terms of the themes of this book, it is meaningless for me to separate out my work inside and outside the University from the work I continue to undertake on myself. It is meaningless for me to separate out my labour as something unique in the practice of my life. Here I am reminded that

in *Song of Solomon*, Toni Morrison wrote: 'You have to know what's wrong before you can find what's right', and this requires a richer, ongoing integration of theory and practice. As a result, this book forms an attempt by me to engage with Marx's conceptions of estrangement and alienation, in particular focused upon being and becoming, dignity and indignity, objectification and subjectivity, and the possibility for recovering autonomy. I recognise that in this some readers will need more detail or explanation of some of Marx's key categories, and whilst I have limited space in this book, libraries and the internet are your friends. I would encourage you to visit Marxists.org or libcom.org as starting points, or to pick up one of the excellent primers to Marx's Capital.

Developing an appreciation of Marx's critical social theory forms an ongoing, emergent dialogue with the open categories deployed by humanist Marxists, in order to explain the world. These categories infuse the development of a critical framework for understanding academic labour with a philosophical approach aimed at understanding the human and the humane, inside a political economic analysis of how value, the commodity and alienation structure our lives and our practices. Thus, a humanist, Marxist analysis enables me to reveal how my practice as an academic and my intellectual work in society, point towards a broader engagement with *both* the political economy of education *and* our collective resistances to capitalist social relations. I take courage from Marx's open reading and re-reading of the world, evidenced throughout his early and mature works, as a starting point for renewing a dialogue between education and society, in the hope of liberating positive human potentialities. This points towards Jung's notion that 'as far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light of meaning in the darkness of mere being.'

In this process of kindling and of recovering dignity, I owe a huge debt to a range of academics, activists, educators and friends. In particular, my critical, academic thinking has developed in an ongoing conversation with a range of inspirational people, including: Ansgar Allen; Gordon Asher; Jon Beech; Kate Bowles; Aidan Byrne; Joyce Canaan; Ioana Cerasella Chis; Cristina Costa; Justin Cruickshank; Bally Dhalu; Martin Eve; Keri Facer; Giselle Ferreira; Josie Fraser; Christian Fuchs; Melonie Fullick; Karen Gregory; Louise Jackson; Jennifer Jones; David Kernohan; Sean

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In *Living a Feminist Life*, Sara Ahmed is clear about how important it is for us to state whose work and practice has enabled our own thinking, and to situate ourselves through the wider groups inside which our solidarity has developed. In the context of my practice, the following people continue to be important: Kehinde Andrews; Sara Ahmed; Stephen Ball; Bifo Berardi; Gurminder Bhambra; Kalwant Bhopal; Werner Bonefeld; Paul Chatterton; George Ciccariello-Maher; Simon Clarke; Harry Cleaver; Nathanial Tobias; Martha Crawford; Ana Dinerstein; Will Davies; Thomas Docherty; Emma Dowling; Nick Dyer-Witheford; Akwugo Emejulu; Silvia Federici; Priyamvada Gopal; Richard Gunn; Max Haiven; David Harvie; John Holloway; bell hooks; Peter Hudis; Anselm Jappe; Tressie McMillan Cottom; Eden Medina; István Mészáros; Heidi Mirza; Chris Newfield; Moishe Postone; William Robinson; Sean Sayers; Audrey Watters; Jay Watts; and Amy Wendling.

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Finally, this book is dedicated to three women who demonstrate strength, constancy and love, and who have enabled me to recover my soul. The marks they have left on my being form traces on these pages. For holding the light, I owe them my life. The first is my friend Tracey Spooner. In hearing me and in believing, she helped me to find my courage and my faith in myself, and to act in the world. The second is my Nan, Elsie Hawes. She taught me the value of unconditionality and how to live with dignity. She taught me that a good-enough life could be described as 'fair-to-middling.' The third is my partner, Jo. Through her patience and care, demonstrated across the whole of my life, she helps me to be.

In solidarity.

Contents

1

Awakenings

1.1 Blind Love and Becoming Awakened

This is a book about estrangement and alienation in academic life; about being a stranger to the nature of your own scholarly work, to yourself and to your peers. This is a book about moving beyond the surface perception of academic work as a labour of love or privilege, in order to understand its essence inside increasingly alienating contexts. This situates academic work against Marx and Engels' (2002, p. 13) analysis of production under capital, its real conditions and relations, as 'constant revolutionizing', 'uninterrupted disturbance', and 'everlasting uncertainty'. The argument arises from the dissonance between: first, the global, competitive re-engineering of higher education (HE) in the name of value; and second, the personal losses associated with the compulsion to work, alongside the realisation of that work as a withering form of living death (Dinerstein and Neary 2002).

These intersections surface forms of estrangement and alienation that are witnessed, understood and felt in differential ways depending upon our personal relationship to privilege and power. However, even those moments of privilege and power melt into air through the commodification of academic lives, and the attempt to valorise the totality of our

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existence through exchange-value and the generation of surplus (Cederström and Fleming 2012). Material modes of analysis are crucial in enabling the lived realities of academic workers in the global economy to be described in relation to richer narratives of estrangement from the production and consumption of everyday life, and in respecting how these differentially affect individuals and groups based on race, gender, sexuality, and (dis)ability (Ahmed 2017).

In responding to these narratives, this book forms an attempt to understand the eruption of alienation inside specific spaces created by and for academic labour. The intention is to understand how alienation serves as a heuristic for refusing or pushing back against capital as a system of dispossession and oppression (Holloway 2002). Such an approach has a rich lineage, with waves of analyses of alienation being catalysed by the rediscovery of Marx's early writings, and their application to societies affected by economic cycles of capitalist boom and bust. Thus, Nisbet (1962, pp. viii) argued that alienation is a 'determining' 'cultural and psychological condition' that reproduces social relations as 'remote, incomprehensible, or fraudulent', engendering hopelessness, 'apathy, boredom, or even hostility.'

Whilst not privileging the source of alienation inside wage-labour, such analyses highlight a general state of *Weltschmerz* or world weariness, which gives us a starting point for uncovering how the production and circulation of alienation are immanent to processes of dispossession and oppression. As a result, through a focus on the manifestations of an alienated existence, we can attempt to reconnect the material production of our lives, in the things that we make and the ways in which we make them, to the humanity of our existence, in the ways that we relate to ourselves and others (Marx 1974). By theorising a circuit of alienation (A-A') we can point towards a world beyond value (Jappe 2016), and towards the richness of life (Holloway 2015). This circuit begins from our simple alienation from the process of production and its products, from ourselves and our humanity (as alienation, A), and is then expanded through the addition of increments of alienation (as expanded alienation, A'). This reflects capital's expansion through the extraction of surplus value and its accumulation as capital through valorisation, reflected in the circuits of commodities and money (C-M-C′, and M-C-M'). The

circuit of expanded alienation (A-A') is our ongoing, everyday alienation from the process of production and its products, from ourselves and our humanity (A), reproduced anew in an expanded circuit, such that A' becomes a renewed form of A. This is a new starting point for an expanding circuit that reflects how capital continues to own our existence through narratives of productivity, excellence, impact, precarity, casualisation, status and so on. This feeds off our need to see ourselves in our work and to maintain our labour as the site of our identities, rather than enabling us to work to abolish that labour.

These forms of analysis are rooted in the modes by which individuals produce in society and how their production is socially-determined. For Marx (1993), this is the point of departure for understanding the capitalist system of production as apparently natural and ahistorical, such that no other form of social mediation can be imagined or desired (Lazzarato 2014; Lordon 2014). What is required is an analysis from below, which enables a reimagining of an escape from capital, rooted in the potential richness of life rather than the imposition of ever-greater material and ecological devastation (Burkett 2014). Following Marx and Engels (2002), moving beyond ever more extensive and destructive crises demands being awakened to the realities of our alienation.

The importance of an engagement with concepts of estrangement and alienation in the context of academic labour lies in the idea of academics becoming and staying *woke*. The reality of #staywoke (Taylor 2016), emerging from the renewal of organised, anti-oppressive actions and networks in the Global North, was rooted in a set of interconnected fronts-of-resistance, which open-out opportunities not only to be awakened to and vigilant about social injustices, but to refuse them. This is about more than awareness-raising, and enables us to become awakened to the need for transnational networks of solidarity, re-organisation and re-imagination (Haiven 2014), as framings for understanding systemic oppressions, such that new methods for resistance can be collectively developed (Ciccariello-Maher 2017; Davis 2016; Narayan 2017).

An engagement with awakenings or being awoken is not about attempting to co-opt or subsume the work emerging from specific networks like Black Lives Matters or Rhodes Must Fall, or that of aboriginal or identity struggles. Rather it takes Ahmed's (2017, p. 10) point that

'theory can do more the closer it gets to the skin'. This is the flow between the concrete and the abstract; between the lived realities of life inside the system of capital and ways of detonating that system. Possibilities emerge from an engagement with ideas of decolonising systems of oppression, in order to understand more fully the revolutionary, dialectical method of proletarian science as an overcoming of the totalising compulsion of capital (Lukács 1990). As Weldon (2006, pp. 79–80) argues, 'marginalized viewpoints are especially valuable for seeing the limits of dominant conceptual schemes because they offer a perspective on social reality that is invisible from the perspective of the dominant group'. This is an attempt to question capital's enforcement of the law of value as a measurement of the dignity of certain bodies, such that specific forms of being are appreciated. Those who do not fall into these valuable measurements are pushed to the margins or exiled into zones of non-being. This is why a range of narratives about being and becoming inside alienated academic labour matter.

Whilst I attempt to draw inspiration from critical race, decolonising, feminist, disability rights, queer and other praxis and movements, I am aware that these can appear to be presented in an undifferentiated way as one counter-hegemonic source of inspiration. I recognise that they have specific lineages and histories, and enable a range of contributions that extend any argument around estrangement in academic practice. Moreover, they do not represent a utopian set of solutions and as with all human practice they generate their own limitations. There is a need to develop this work through concrete examples that come from these communities and movements, to give further contextualisation, texture and specificity. However, my purpose here is to challenge my own privilege: first, by pointing towards a range of narratives that are new to me; and second, by beginning a process of listening to positions that challenge my own.

Thus, this work also forms an attempt to question whether academics are awake to their role in the reproduction of systems of alienating oppression. It questions how academic labour is insinuated in the circuits of capitalist reproduction, and whether those who labour in academia are able to imagine that another world is possible. This is amplified by the psychology of academic work, and the idea that it encompasses privilege.

Tokumitsu (2014) argues that this is critical for academics, whose identities are fused with their work, with a focus upon their subject and research, their students and their status, such that they compromise their own labour rights.

Selling academia as a labour of love enables those *in-power* or with *power-over* the world to entreat educators to give everything. This fetishises or reifies certain forms of work as loveable because they are intellectual, creative or social. It obscures the ways in which academic labour is increasingly proletarianised, as its demands are grounded in competition and performance management, so that outcomes-focused, routinised work becomes the norm. These transformations have catalysed a wide range of expressions of distress from those who work and study in universities. At times, this has been explained away as the consequence of a scholarly vocation that adapts poorly to the realities of marketization under capitalism. Indeed, for many academics this has been the basis of a defence of scholarly vocation against the encroachments of surveillance and the normalisation of competitive practices in a profession founded on ideals of collegiality. As a result, such work points towards the sublimation and negation of the self, because it identifies the ego with performance. The results of this are culturally acceptable self-harming activities (Hall and Bowles 2016; Turp 2002), and reports of: overwork; mental health issues; self-harm and suicide; and of academic exodus or quitting the academy.

Thus, being awakened to alienation as a heuristic for understanding academic life enables us to strip back the layers of domination and oppression, in order to understand how they are related to the commodification of scholarly life. However, it needs to push beyond that to understand how modes of social metabolic control are developed. Here, I argue that capital expands by metabolising labour-power and that it does this across the social terrain by creating a structure rooted in the production and extraction of surplus-value. This is a moment of control that is instantiated through our social relations, such that it is reproduced as capital at the level of society. Thus, society is rooted in the reproduction of the universe of value, notionally presented as second-order mediations of the division of labour, commodity exchange and private property (Mészáros 2005, 2008, 2010), which are in fact grounded in alienated labour (Clarke

1991). This grounding appears behind the backs of those who labour in academia, and ensures that their lack of autonomy or control over their work, which is increasingly dominated by productivity metrics and time, appears as natural or normal. The structuring of activity inside HE, increasingly defined through competition appears to have a life or dynamic of its own. If academics are to become part of the solution to the problem of capitalism, rather than simply reproducing it, then it becomes increasingly important that they understand their role in maintaining flows of oppression and domination through alienated labour.

1.2 Being and Becoming

1.2.1 Forms of Separation

The analysis developed here is rooted a philosophical tradition focused upon the material production of life and the relationship between human activity and the world. It emerges in relation to ideas of human being and becoming, of subjectification and objectification, and of the universal, the partial and the individual. Thus, it relates academic labour to Marx's (1991, p. 373) view of capital as 'an alienated social power which has gained an autonomous position and confronts society as a thing'. It moves beyond what it means to labour as an academic, through a focus on teaching, research, scholarship, public engagement, knowledge transfer and administration. However, it does not seek to do this in order to fetishise or reify academic labour. Rather it seeks to uncover how academic labour maintains and reproduces 'separation [which] is the real generation process of capital' (Marx 1972, p. 42).

Forms of separation of academic identity dominate academic being, based on status or the idealisation of processes of becoming tenured. These identities intersect with gender, sexuality, race and (dis)ability, and are brought into sharp relief with the materiality of the world. An engagement with alienation questions how those identities might be abolished and those individuals transformed into fuller, richer human beings. For Hegel, such richness emerged in the world from the position of the totality, in 'a self-dependent world which in its essential nature is *already*

complete' (Hegel 1971, p. 62). It is for humans to come to terms with the unity of the world as it is given (Wood 2011). This rests upon the idea that capital *is* the totality, and as such it emerges from and gives form to essential, material and interconnected mediations. The structuring determinations of life flow from and coalesce into capital; the totality of human experience is shaped by our interaction with and as capitalist social relations. This totality relies upon the foundational violence of separation and forms of resistance have to be seen in terms of opposition to its specific materiality. Moreover, the relationship between the totality and these mediations points towards a flow of history and the possibility of universal truth in human essence, and an overcoming of division. In Marx's universe, this means that any opposition cannot transcend capital as a hegemonic power by offering a partial, privileged alternative. Instead, opposition needs to be situated historically and materially, and needs to refuse the reformist criticisms of the need for a better capitalism inspired by liberal thinkers (Smith 2008), or the transhistorical analyses of neoconservatives (Hayek 2001; von Mises 2006) who view capital as a necessity that has abolished history.

It is in understanding how that abstract individuality is developed inside the totality of capitalist social relations that self-mediation might emerge, rather than through the unity imposed by an abstract, outsourced totality or spirit. For Marx such ideas begin to emerge in the *Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right* (1970), through an analysis of the external determination of the individual, the divorce of humans from their objective being, and the division of society. In writing *On the Jewish Question* (Marx 1843), he developed an argument based upon the splitting of humans into public and private, and their separation from their communal being (*Gemeinwesen*), from themselves and from others. This is at the core of his work in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (Marx 1974), which offers a critique of alienation as an attempt to unify the separation of humans from the material production of their everyday lives and the essence of those lives. This pivots around the loss of self and other through capitalist social relations, where the self becomes an object rather than a subject, and where the things that we produce are fetishised and come to dominate ourselves and our relations with others. In this estrangement of ourselves from the conditions and products of

our work, we lose our ability to self-mediate our relationship to nature and to other people, and instead our lives are mediated externally through the division of labour, private property and commodity exchange, which intensify our separation from each other.

These external powers reinforce the abstraction and objectification of our individuality, because 'political economy expresses moral laws in *its own way*' (Marx 1974, p. 106), and these moral laws fetishise or reify inhuman things rather than humane values. In *The German Ideology* (Marx and Engels 1998), the materiality of these forms of splitting, separation and estrangement takes centre stage, in their relation to social relations that are in tension with forces of production. The lived experience of this materiality gives rise to and is formed from the ways in which the world of commodities and the universe of value are mediated. In *Volume 3 of Capital*, Marx (1991, p. 809) writes of these mediations that 'even the best spokesman of classical economy remained more or less in the grip of the world of illusion'.

In developing an understanding of capitalism as a totality, and also as a power alien to humans that is at the same time conjured-up by humans, there is a flow between the philosophical estrangement of individuals from the practices and products of their existence and their alienation from their essence or being. This does not rest upon the integration of an individual into a metaphysical, Hegelian world spirit, but instead develops an understanding of how the production of the world rests 'on material, empirically verifiable acts', and how across a global terrain as 'world-historical activity' humans have 'become more and more enslaved under a power alien to them' (Marx and Engels 1998, p. 59). These flows of estrangement emerge from material practices that reproduce and expand value, and from labour-power as the form-giving fire (Marx 1993) of social production.

1.2.2 Fetishism and Second-Order Mediations

Such material practices, rooted in the production and circulation of commodities, objectify that labour-power in things. In a society governed by market-driven exchange-value, where money is increasingly the primary

mediation of life, commodities are increasingly fetishised as subjects. As Marx notes in the *Grundrisse* (1993, pp. 196–97) the realisation of exchange-values in circulation makes explicit the fact that 'my product is a product only insofar as it is for others'; 'it is a product for me only insofar as it has been alienated, become for others'; 'it is for the other only insofar as he himself alienates his product'; 'production is not an end in itself to me, but a means'. As a result, he argues that alienation emerges from the movement of society as a process of production and circulation rooted in the autonomy of capitalist social relations that appear to be a natural force dominating life. Thus, 'the point of departure is not the free social individual' (*ibid.*, p. 197).

If we take this idea of unfreedom, we are able to situate academic practice as increasingly objectified, precisely because academics are valued based upon their human capital in the form of skills, capacities, knowledge, capabilities and so on. Academic commodities govern academic humanity, and a series of governing procedures and institutions reinforce the power of commodities or things, rooted in the control of labour-power, over human essence and existence (Holloway 2003, 2016; Lukács 1990). Thus, developing a meaningful analysis of alienation inside academic contexts need to engage with de-layering the modes of academic production (crucially, including decolonising those modes), in order to move beyond second-order mediations and to reveal the source of capital's constant reproduction and power as alienated labour (Marx 1991). Inside the University this materially affects the relationships between students, teachers and administrators, for instance: in the monitoring of academics by students in satisfaction ratings; in the disciplining of students by academics through assessment and the use of learning analytics; in attendance monitoring of students by administrators; and in the performance monitoring of academics (Cleaver 2000).

Rather than 'free, conscious activity' (Marx 1974, p. 68), second-order mediations exert control, by further objectifying humans, and fetishising or reifying commodities, skills, services, money and so on. These second-order mediations maximise alienation, through which humans become strangers to their work products, their working practices, themselves, and the essence of their species (Marx 1974, 1993; Marx and Engels 1998). The language of becoming strangers increasingly conjures up terms

focused upon loss of self or other: alienation; disintegration; division; divorce; externalisation; isolation; separation. These are all concrete terms rooted in material practice, and they reflect Marx's objection to the philosophical abstraction of human consciousness. Alienation emerges from concrete, material activities in a world governed by a totality that is underpinned by labour. The time and debt-fuelled anxieties of students and staff, rooted in a language of abstract individuality that is reified through a focus on a language of excellence, impact, productivity and teaching intensity, are motive forces in this process of domination (Hall and Bowles 2016), and the denial of self-mediation underpins an expanding circuit of alienation (A-A').

For Marx (1974), abstract individuality emerges from separation, which meant that human existence could only ever be a contradiction between partiality and universality. Universal human development in a system of domination by capital focuses upon the expansion and development of the universe of value, and on capital as the automatic subject (Postone 1993). Developing the autonomy of capital as a determinate totality can only occur at the expense of the life of those doomed to labour (Burkett 2014). Any form of social metabolic control, rooted in the expansion of capital, stands in opposition to genuine universality, in which the interests of society can be developed beyond the division of labour, commodity production and exchange, and private property. Instead, life is grounded in the idea of humans as 'species-beings' (*Gattungswesen*), liberated from oppression enforced through a system of domination that is in turn based upon separation of individuals rooted in their base, selfish interests (Mészáros 2005).

Reconnecting humans to their species-being as the reappropriation of human essence emerges from an understanding of the philosophical roots of Marx's philosophy and an understanding of the relationship between alienation, estrangement, fetishism and reification. In particular, Marx built on the work of Hegel and Feuerbach to develop a critical attitude towards the material foundations of society, whilst moving beyond the supersession of alienation through transcendence or through the overthrow of reified others. Thus, he argued that the task for philosophers is to move beyond the sacred, to uncover the secular, historical material basis of human self-alienation (Marx 1998).

Marx was interested in moving beyond a moral, aesthetic or utopian position, towards one which we might describe as a critical, pedagogic approach deployed at the level of society. This situates life in its material and historical reality, and points towards liberation not in terms of a transhistorical, utopian morality, rather as a position that is constantly in question. In revealing processes of enslavement, a re-engagement with ideas of subversive movement and negative dialectics is pivotal (Adorno 1966; Bonefeld 2016; Ciccariello-Maher 2017). This enables us to reveal the immanent connections between phenomena as they are socially-produced, in order to understand how social reality or sociability is mediated and thereby constructed. Moving beyond estrangement or alienation was revealed as a necessary outcome of capitalist social relations, and a necessity inherent in the dialectical process (Postone 1993; Sayers 1998; Wendling 2009). Overcoming alienation is a key element in the work of abolishing the system of capital and in transforming social metabolic control so that it values the human. Thus, for Postone (1993), it becomes important to reconsider the relationship between capital and labour and to recognise that the working class, and its alienated labour, is integral to capitalism, and places the abolition of that alienated labour (rather than the reification of the working class as a vanguard movement) at the heart of the programme of transformation. The key is not simply to focus on capital's command structure, but to develop an alternate view of social metabolic control based on self-mediation and the dignity of distinction and difference. It focuses upon dismantling zones of non-being, as an integral part of the process of abolition, and thereby overcoming the structural violence of alienation.

1.3 Alienated Labour and the Law of Value

Marx's analyses reveal the contradiction at the heart of the totality, namely capital's desire to free itself from its reliance on labour for its own reproduction and its inability to realise this independence. By uncovering this contradiction, Marx points to the historically-specific, determinate dimensions of capitalist social relations, which appear to be transhistorical and essential, but which are in fact rooted in a particular conception

of sociability or social production. This offers 'the possibility of its critique and possible transformation' (Postone 1993, p. 224), based upon a reconnection between humans and the world that is self-mediated and that offers new ways of relating to each other and the world. As capitalistically-structured activity, labour cannot enable such activity, because that labour forms the ground of all alienation, structured through second-order mediations. These infect the University just as they do any other business, and education as they do any sector of the economy. The competitive reorganisation of academic labour *for-value*, inside the market and through national and transnational policy frameworks, amplifies processes of objectification, which themselves rupture the academic psyche through narratives of ill-health, overwork and precarity.

Such ruptures are an outcome of the alienation of the academic labourer from: first, her labour-power, which is made precarious as it is sold in the market; second, the products of her labour, which are financialised and marketised for their exchange-value rather than their social utility; third, herself as she becomes a self-exploiting entrepreneur; and fourth, her humanity as a species-being, reinforced through global competition (Marx and Engels 1998). In order to understand how commodification affects the academic ego, by reshaping scholarship and research as knowledge transfer, through excellence and impact, and in redefining teaching for entrepreneurship and employability, it is necessary to reconnect the categorical labour of academics to the site of its alienation. Commodification, and the fetishisation of things enacts a power over people, which is rooted in private property, enabling the capitalist who controls means of subsistence to force labourers to sell their labour-power, in order to survive.

A discussion of the relationship between alienated labour, competition and the production/circulation/consumption of academic products is central to how we might reimagine the purposes of academic work at the level of society. This responds to Clarke's (1991, p. 255) call 'to resume the project which Marx initiated of linking an emancipatory social theory to an emancipatory social practice.' Such a project situates the exploitation of academic labour against the wider exploitation of paid and unpaid labour in the social factory. Not only must the academic labourer overcome her own competition with other academics to reduce her exploita-

tion, but she must situate this cognitively and emotionally against the abolition of wage-labour more generally.

1.3.1 The Law of Value

Capital is value in motion, compelled by its perpetual search for additional value and surplus-value through the hyper-exploitation of labour-power and the concomitant proletarianisation of labour. The fabric of value is the social relation between producers, and this drives organisational and technological innovation in all sectors and businesses, increasing the interconnections between those sectors and businesses, and driving new associations of capitals (Marx 1992; Szadkowski 2016). The system of value expansion generates an 'epoch-making mode of exploitation, which in the course of its historical development revolutionises the entire economic structure of society by its organisation of the labour process and its gigantic extension of technique' (Marx 1992, p. 120). It is important to recognise that the economic structure of society, materialised through relations and forces of production, is perpetually in motion under capitalism. Capital, as value in motion, 'is a movement, a circulatory process through different stages' of production, circulation and consumption (*ibid.*, p. 185), materialised in circuits of money capital, productive capital and commodity capital (Marx 2004), the movement of which intensify 'periodic revolutions in value' (Marx 1992, p. 185). Such intensifications enable a unity of contradiction and struggle inside the totality of capitalist production, realising the deterritorialisation of qualitative barriers of surplus-value production, and the re-territorialisation of new terrains for accumulation (Deleuze and Guattari 1983).

These contradictions are rooted in the labour theory of value as a set of tensions between the quantitative and qualitative construction of labour-power, as it is instantiated inside commodities. The value of a commodity is a quantity of the labour socially-necessary for its production at a given, global, average productivity. Differential skills and technical composition of that labour are brought into stark relief in the market, as the quantitative value of a commodity is determined by abstract human labour. In the market, commodities which have been produced separately are abstracted

from their concrete and specific aspects, and are equalised as abstract social labour. Thus, Clarke (1989, p. 136) argues that it is the integration of these categories of abstract labour with the value-form, inside a productive labour process rooted in valorisation, which is specific to capitalism.

Thus, the law of value governs commodity-exchange and hence investment, through the distribution of surplus (as total social wealth) across sectors and businesses, including in relation to the average rate of profit (Clarke 1994; Marx 1991). Thus, irrespective of the specific, concrete human capital embedded in specific forms of labour, the labour theory of value maintains that abstract social labour, equalised across the global terrain of production, underpins the expansion of capital. Whilst Marx (2004) contended that concrete labour enabled the determination of the use value of commodities as means of production, it is abstract labour that determines their value in exchange. This enables Marx (1974) to argue that capital is a hegemonic, *inhuman* power, which enforces the ongoing destruction of the conditions of social metabolic reproduction, including rising surplus populations and environmental degradation.

In this process, HE is a huge investment opportunity (McGettigan 2013) for transnational networks of policymakers, finance capital, educational technology firms, publishers, and so on (Ball 2012). The use of policy *both* to open-up commercial access to public services *and* to raise student debt aligns with the stimulation of demand for educational commodities. It is increasingly the law of value, and control of the alienated labour-power that forms the source of value, which mediates the relationships between the University, the State and finance capital. Here, the production, circulation and accumulation of *surplus*-value connect educational commodities and the relations of production that create them, to ideas of entrepreneurialism, innovation and growth. Thus, the ability to reorganise universities, in order to drive efficiencies and to increase productivity, alters the social nature of academic work. It is the transnational exchange-value of academic commodities, including academic labour-power, which enables universities to compete. This duality of use and exchange also enables universities to proletarianise academic labour (Dyer-Witheford 2015). As a result, it is important to see the value produced by academic labour as a social relationship that is governed by the

labour time it takes to produce and circulate academic commodities in a global market. This value is then reflected in the relationship between those commodities, and the ways in which their speed of production and circulation can be quickened.

Hence, a focus on the production of surplus-value, and the expansion of the universe of value, reveals the changing historical and material nature of academic labour, as it is subsumed *both* formally *and* really (endnotes 2010; Hall and Bowles 2016; Marx 2004). I address the concept of subsumption as a form of re-engineering in Chap. 2, but it is important to note that these processes drive the search for relative surplus-value and competitive advantage, through organisational development and an increase in the organic composition of capital. They also ensure that the collective work of the classroom and the laboratory is disciplined across a global system of production. Thus, expansion of a field of surplus-value production is compelled through competition operating transnationally, which develops academic labour as a social activity. As a result, academic labour is increasingly focused upon value creation through production for exchange rather than use (Wendling 2009). Such value creation can then be materialised as surpluses to be redirected into dividends or bonuses, or to drive new areas of innovation. Moreover, academic labour-power as a commodity is increasingly driven towards activity that is productive of surplus-value through the transfer of skills to students or through the development of new commodities as knowledge exchange or transfer (Harvie 2016; Marx 1991).

However, as labour-saving processes or technologies are deployed, the amount of academic labour that can be exploited is reduced, and *both* the accumulation of value *and* the rate of profit fall (Marx 1993). The law of value is, hence, the production and reproduction of crisis for capital is underpinned by alienated labour-power and yet it is always searching to decouple itself from that labour-power. Across the economy this tends towards a systemic or secular crisis as surplus value has to be extracted from less living labour, and because there are limits to the existing outlets for profitable investment (Carchedi and Roberts 2013; Hall 2015). For universities forced to compete as businesses, crises create a desperate search for new educational markets and technological innovation, and underpin the proletarianisation of academic labour.

1.4 Proletarianised Academic Labour

Universities have been profoundly affected by responses to the global financial crisis that began in 2007. These have intensified the longer history of the financialisation and marketisation of the sector, as a response to capital's inability to reinstate stable forms of accumulation (Jappe 2014). The increasing drive for competition between providers (Newfield 2016), debt-fuelled study (McMillan Cottom 2016) and bond-driven institutional debt (McGettigan 2011), and the reproduction of universities as nodes in transnational activist networks of capitals or associations of capitals (Hall 2014; Szadkowski 2016), has not enabled academic labour to become productive-enough of value. This inability questions *both* the subordination of policy to economic determinism *and* the legitimacy of neoliberal regimes of governance, including changes to, or the defunding of, certain university functions like teaching. These processes of re-engineering flag how the public or use-value of academic work and its products is increasingly and explicitly secondary to its exchange-value in a global market.

The subsumption of HE under the structuring logic of value has highlighted the weakening of autonomy for the academic labourer beyond the temporary amelioration of her labour relations with those who direct the University. Moreover, it plays out through a policy narrative with five functions. First, it fetishises the generation of human capital, and in particular entrepreneurialism and employability rooted in ideas of productivity (McGettigan 2015). Second, it increases the proletarianisation of academic labour through organisational development and technological rationalisation (Dyer-Witheford 2015). Third, it amplifies the internalisation of performative responses amongst individual academics and students (Ball 2015), rooted in narratives of excellence, impact, outcomes and surplus (Department for Education (DfE) 2017). Fourth, it erodes the possibility of using publicly-funded, regulated, and governed universities to deliver more socially-just outcomes, although whether education delivers public goods is contested (Marginson 2016). Fifth, by these means educational opportunities and services are transformed into tradeable, corporate assets (Willetts 2014), rooted in a discourse of productivity (Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (DBIS) 2015; Her

Majesty's (HM) Treasury 2015). These mechanisms suture national, educational systems into the global higher education market, and they also crack open HE markets to a range of transnational businesses operating in private finance, publishing, technology, and so on.

The reification of academic work is amplified by forms of performance management that act as control mechanisms and thereby deny autonomy, as they represent momentary, disciplinary judgements of 'worth, quality or value of an individual or organisation' that are externally-imposed (Ball 2003, p. 216). This drives an entrepreneurial turn inside the University, which recasts the academic as innovator whose formation inside-and-outside the University can be witnessed and judged as creative and valuable, not because it is useful but because it can be exchanged. As Marx (1991, p. 644) notes, the re-focusing of educational labour on the productive development of the human capital of students, alongside the generation of new forms of wealth generated competitively, deforms the nature of education and the personality of the teacher. This 'misfortune' is amplified '[t]he more completely these *conditions of labour* are mobilised against [her] as alien property, the more effectively the *formal* relationship between capital and wage-labour is established' (Marx 1991, p. 1026).

The commodification of academic labour has also left it vulnerable to global labour arbitrage, with demands on academic staff to be flexible and resilient in responding to the normalisation of cultures of job competition through precarious employment and labour rights (Norton 2016; McKenna 2015). This includes dramatic increases in staff employed on fixed-term and zero-hours contracts (National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) 2014; University and College Union (UCU) 2018). Restructuring interventions aimed at minimising labour costs are perfected in the accumulation and manipulation of data focused on increasing system outputs, for instance though: the development of baskets of metrics that will enable 'learning gain' or 'teaching excellence' to be measured in the UK (Johnson 2015); or the public release of a substantial tranche of college performance data by the US government, to enhance the consumerisation of HE participation (US Department of Education 2015); or the increasingly sophisticated development of survey instruments and student experience dashboards that inform the delivery of

education-as-a-service into a highly mobile global education market (Australian Government Department of Education and Training (DET) 2016).

As a result, the contexts for academic labour depress academic work through: technological and organisational innovation, and new services, which drive competitive advantage; an attrition on the labour-time for assessing/teaching/publishing compared to rival institutions; rises in casual and precarious employment, as an attack on labour costs and rights; changes in the technical conditions of the process of academic production, which enable new accumulations of academic products to become additional means of production; the need to sustain and grow surpluses that can be invested in estates and infrastructure projects; and the drive to accumulate academic value through comparative national and international league tables. In response to this and in order to overcome their surplus, precarious identities, these academic labourers have two options. First, to sell themselves piecemeal, in their teaching, assessment, feedback, research, scholarship, knowledge exchange and impact. Second, to take on increased levels of debt in the hope of generating innovative human capital. These realities of proletarianisation form filaments that enable us to trace its roots in alienated labour.

1.4.1 Academic Autonomy and the Abolition of Academic Labour

A focus on politics and organisation is an attempt to recover individual subjectivity against its reification as privileged academic work. As Cleaver (1993) notes in his final two theses on the Secular Crisis of Capitalism, this idea of recovering subjectivity through radical democracy is critical in liberating humanity from the coercive laws of competition and the market. For Cleaver, the creation of a revolutionary subjectivity is entwined with the need to develop: '[a] politics of alliance against capital… not only to accelerate the circulation of struggle from sector to sector of the class, but to do so in such a manner as to build a post-capitalist politics of difference without antagonism.' Here the idea of academic as labourer working to abolish her labour is central, rather than the

academic as fetishised carrier of specific skills, practices and knowledges. This questions how academic labour might be understood in concrete and abstract terms, and then abolished as part of a social struggle for subjectivity that is situated against value production and accumulation. It then becomes possible to ask whether academic labour might be transformed and liberated as a form of mass intellectuality that can be used inside and across society through a co-operative, democratic project of refusal that is full of dignity and which is fuelled by indignation at the present state of things.

As a result, it becomes important to situate the academic labour of staff and students that contributes to social movements like Black Lives Matter, the Indigenous Environmental Network and Occupy, against the potential for reimagining the pedagogic practices of the University in other social forms. One issue is the extent to which such intellectual activity can support refusal and resistance to the dramatic growth of socio-economic inequalities, including the deep and interwoven gender, ethnic and racial dimensions to escalating global poverty and inequality. In grappling with mediation in the production of value, the transnational relationships between students and staff as academic labourers might be drawn out, alongside the relationships between academics and those who labour in other sectors of the global economy. As a result, the relationship between the law of value and the University might be used to reimagine working class composition and solidarity, and to drive beyond 'bourgeois ideologies of social contract, pluralism and democracy' (*ibid.*).

In the face of the secular crisis and the real subsumption of academic labour, this requires those who labour inside the University to recognise their relationship to capitalism as 'a social order based on domination, i.e., on the imposition of set of social rules through which, tendentially, all of life is organized' (*ibid.*), and more explicitly to global class antagonism. In this, recognition of our alienation not as academics, but as labour and as labour-power, matters. This is an alienation from our humanity, as more is demanded of us as academics. In this we need to recognise the duality that: first academic labour is labour and is locked in a struggle with capital over the production of value; and second that this form of labour is kettled inside a structure that exists for the autonomy of capital alone (Postone 1993). The question is then, what is to be done?

1.5 Literature on the Crisis of Academia

Work on the crisis of HE tends to focus on the mechanics and ideological underpinnings of marketisation and financialisation, and these carry reformist defences of the 'public university' or attempts to renew public funding, regulation and governance (Bailey and Friedman *eds* 2011; Campaign for the Public University (CPU) n.d.; Collini 2012, 2017; Council for the Defence of British Universities (CDBU) n.d.; Readings 1996). In general, these relate to the education sector of the economy or the HE sector as a whole, or make the University or even knowledge the unit of analysis. There is also a tendency towards methodological nationalism, in terms of the imagined, reified University. Thus, there has been a focus on: the public and social benefits (as a form of wealth) of HE (Barnett 2011, 2013; Marginson 2016); instrumentalism, austerity governance and regulation, debt-driven financing and marketisation (Brown 2013; Holmwood 2011; McGettigan 2013); and processes of commodification of academic knowledge, alongside employer and enterprise-driven curricula and research (Newfield 2016). Elsewhere, such questioning has focused around the changing nature of academic labour markets and contingent labour, on the entrepreneurial *Uberification* of the University (Hall 2016), and on survival inside academic capitalism (Ball 2015; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004).

A connected strand of analysis has focused upon academic leadership, with attention given to government intervention through targets, risk-based approaches and new public management (Deem et al. 2008). This work has flagged an attrition on the idea of the University as a self-critical scholarly community (Neary and Winn 2017), and instead highlights its 'repressive reality' (*Camarades* 1968, p. 4). It also points towards the potential for distributed or democratic forms of leadership to generate new forms of scholarly practice at the level of society (Hall and Winn 2017). This work pivots around the concept of *mass intellectuality*, as a new kind of common sense or socially-useful knowledge, which is produced democratically through association, in response to crises of sociability or social reproduction (University of Utopia n.d.) and the emergence of HE as a controversial and contested terrain (Barnett 2016).

In terms of the relationship between academics and their institutions, Docherty (2011) has spoken of a process-driven culture rooted in mistrust that questions academic legitimacy. Processes of de-legitimisation have been folded into cycles of overwork, or a refusal to refuse work, and toxic cultures of shame rooted in perceptions of performance (Gill 2009; McMillan Cottom 2016). For Gill, this makes ethnographic forms of research into the labour processes, organisational governance and conditions of production of academic work crucial, both as a moment of solidarity and in revealing possibilities for action. Such calls have a long lineage, and almost fifty years ago Le Baron (1971, p. 567) wished to 'exhort my fellow academics to work within academia towards a new consciousness, transcending habits of egoism, competition, and possessing'. This matters because globally there are: first, reports of adjunct professors who 'don't even earn the federal minimum wage' (Saccaro 2014); second, struggles led by postgraduate researcher-led committees that push the University to honour the essential role of teaching assistants in the form of fair pay and labour rights (CUPE3903 n.d.); third, *quitlit* reports of academics leaving the profession (Morris 2015); fourth, individuals who witness self-imposed overwork as a form of self-harm; fifth, reports of the suicides of those who are classified as precarious, or for whom status is being removed; and sixth, networks reporting on casualisation (CASA n.d.).

Other authors have highlighted the potential for 'non-hegemonic political formation and transformation' across the University, in order to generate 'really useful critical theory' (Amsler 2015, p. 4) from the lived reality of academic work. This potential matters because the University is central to capital's acquisition of collective intelligence and its reproduction (Derrida 2002). It is 'a paradigmatic site of struggle… in which wider social struggles are won and lost (Caffentzis and Federici 2007). Thus, academic-activists have focused upon the potential for revolutionising: first, the relationship between students and academics, and for developing the consciousness of students-as-producers (Neary and Winn 2009); second, the classroom through the role of critical pedagogy in reframing the curriculum and its production democratically against the corporate university and knowledge economy (Cowden and Singh *eds* 2013; Torres and Reyes 2011); third, governance through co-operation

(Neary and Winn 2017; Puukka et al. 2013), and the reconceptualisation of academic practice; fourth, the identity of the University through wilful processes of decolonisation (Ahmed 2017; Brennan and Naidoo 2008; Emejulu 2017a, b); fifth, knowledge-production by disrupting established flows of information (De Sousa Santos *ed*. 2007; Motta 2017); and sixth, society's relationship to the University through an analysis of cognitive capitalism and affective production (Berardi 2009; Dowling 2011), and new relationships between society and intellectual work (Apple 2012; Hall and Winn 2017). In this way an understanding of academic autonomy is central to the struggle for the overcoming of academic alienation, and the abolition of academic labour, as a way-marker in the transformation of social relations (Allman 2007).

1.6 Location and Structure

Throughout the argument developed below I draw upon examples that erupt transnationally or in a range of national contexts. However, it is clear that my own Anglosphere understanding and experience is essential to my engagement with alienation in academic labour. In particular, the UK context is writ large on these pages. That said, my engagement with *both* a range of academic contexts, including examples of capitalist discourses infecting and inflicting academic work, *and* with intersectional experiences, is an attempt to broaden our collective debate over alienated labour, capitalist social relations and their abolition. I am attempting to utilise these other/othered experiences to shine a light on my own white, male, professorial privilege, and to contextualise further issues like teaching and research excellence, casualisation and proletarianisation, the discourse of metrics, and so on. In so doing, I recognise the specificity of these different contexts, although I do not have the space to unpack them.

The tripartite structure of the book frames alienation as a means of critiquing academic identity and academic work, and of providing insights into the development of alternative forms of praxis. The first part considers the *terrain of academic labour*, and consists of chapters on *Crisis* and *Alienation*. *Crisis* details the mechanisms through which the secular

crisis of capitalism is restructuring academic labour. This is in terms of policy that shapes a competitive environment, the financialisation of academic work through student debt, bond markets and so on, and through the commodification and marketisation of the outputs of academic work. Here, I describe how the incorporation of academic labour into the self-valorisation process of capital through research and pedagogic innovation enables a critique of the proletarianisation of the University.

Alienation situates Marx's analysis of estrangement, alienation, fetishisation and reification against academic labour. It does this through a focus on the activity of production, in its relationship to material and philosophical conceptualisations. As a result, a dialectical understanding of the layers of objectification, separation, mediation and identity-development emerges. This categorical analysis enables an unfolding of capitalism's mode of social metabolic control, and its relationship to individual essence, human capital theory, and the reality of being othered or negated inside the system. This develops an analysis of the expanding circuit of alienation (A-A'), and the potential for its overcoming through a focus on the richness of human experience.

In the second part, the *terrain of academic alienation* is analysed. *Knowledge* analyses the alienation of the products of the academic's labour, as teaching or research, which are commodified and marketised for their exchange-value rather than their social utility. This is related to the competitive restructuring processes of research and teaching impact measures. Critical here is a connection to the internalisation by the academic of the disciplinary force of performance management, in the production, ownership and distribution of the products of academic labour. Marx's (1993) conception of the general intellect as a form of alien knowledge and property, and its relationship to the separation of subject curricula and research, is important in describing capitalism as a naturalised system. Here the relationship between subjectivity and objectification, use and exchange, and the potential for new forms of humanism related to the functions of academic knowledge are developed.

Profession frames a discussion of whether it is possible for academics to move beyond fetishing their own labour-power as privileged. I ask whether it is possible to reflect at a social-level on the alienation of aca-

demic labour-power in terms of the alienation of labour-power in general? The chapter focuses upon the mediated conditions of work, in order to unpick the proletarianisation of academic labour-power. As a result, it becomes possible to describe the autonomy of capital as opposed to labour, and to uncover its ideological basis.

Weltschmerz develops the alienation of the academic from herself, as she is increasingly made and re-made as an academic entrepreneur whose labour only has worth where it is value. As a result, the internalisation of specific behaviours that are disciplinary becomes a key outcome for the system of production, with concomitant manifestations of physical and psychological distress. Here ideas of anti-humanism and dehumanism, linked to melancholy, anxiety and ill-being are analysed in relation to the proletarianisation of the University as an anxiety machine. The chapter addresses how formal and real subsumption, in terms of the re-engineering of the governance of higher education and the reproduction of academic labour in the name of value, feed off and into alienation.

Identity address the alienation of the academic from her species through the iron law of competition, reinforced through global academic labour arbitrage, research and teaching metrics, and performance management. The argument connects academic labour to the hierarchical, globalised forces of production that shape capitalist social relations, in order to discuss the *form* and the *organising principles* under which academic labour is subsumed for value. The chapter argues that academics have a tendency to reify their own labour such that it becomes something that they struggle *for*, rather than *against*. However, repeatedly adopting this approach can only lead to a sense of helplessness and alienation from other forms of globalised labour. By refocusing on the form of labour in general, rather than the specific content of academic labour, it becomes possible to move beyond reification towards struggle.

The third section develops a *terrain for overcoming alienation*, with two chapters on *Indignation* and *Autonomy*. *Indignation* focuses upon the role of intellectual labour in a range of transnational struggles for an alternative form of social metabolic control. Pivoting around counter-hegemony and anti-power, the focus is upon the movement of dignity in the development of revolutionary subjectivity. This chapter discusses the possibili-

ties for autonomous action by academics, which in-turn demonstrates solidarity or association with a range of struggles against labour.

Finally, the idea of *Autonomy* is critiqued in light of the duality that: first, capital is the automatic subject searching to secure permanent self-valorisation; and second, that our search for autonomy-beyond-labour is the crisis of capital. This struggle pivots around emancipation from labour, and for self-mediation as the key organising principle for life. The chapter focuses on the role of academic work and intellectual labour in developing the realm of autonomy/freedom and reducing the realm of heteronomy/necessity. Here there is a focus upon the richness of human life and the development of alternative forms of social metabolic control. The argument regards alienation and its revelation as a necessity in the transformation to life under communism. Thus, the chapter discusses the potential for the social, collectivised use of academic labour, through the liberation of socialised skills, practices and knowledge from inside the University.

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Part I

The Terrain of Academic Labour

2

Crisis

2.1 The Secular Crisis and Higher Education

2.1.1 The Reality of Crisis

A critical reframing of global HE situates it against the conception of a secular crisis of capitalism. This idea of systemic, economic stagnation has its roots in Keynes' (1936) and Hansen's (1955) analyses of the Great Depression, which focused on economic drag factors related to low population-growth, war and imperial ambition, and society's incapacity for innovation and investment. This was then developed by Baran and Sweezy (1966) and Magdoff and Sweezy (1987) in terms of the distorting gravity that monopoly finance capital had on the productive economy, and the ongoing inability of global capitalism to maintain productive (rather than fictional) forms of accumulation. Latterly, economists like the former US Secretary to the Treasury, Larry Summers (2014) and the Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman (2014), have extended the argument about the secular, systemic stagnation of global capitalism in the aftermath of the 2007 economic crisis with a Keynesian analysis. They argue that slow population growth in the global North, lower levels of educational attainment, rising levels of inequality and massive levels of public

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and private debt, have acted as brakes on the global economy. The argument is that relatively high unemployment or under-employment, low interest rates and liquidity traps, and an unwillingness to invest in capital projects or people, have led to below-trend aggregate demand in all sectors of the economy. As a result the new normal for the global economy might be on-going weak or no growth.

This mainstream analysis has been developed in the context of managed decline in economies in the global North, which has been temporarily arrested by countermeasures like opening up access to natural or ecological resources, like rare earth metals and fossil fuels, and the stimulus of deregulated finance capital (Elliott and Atkinson 2012). However, responses to this long depression (Roberts 2018) have revealed the global economy's ongoing structural defects, which had been covered by three decades of financialisation since the collapse of the Bretton Woods agreement. As credit money expands at a faster rate than the productive value it represents, risk and volatility increase, and chronic rather than acute financial instability forms the background to social reproduction (Lazzarato 2013). This extends Marx's (2004, p. 778) view of credit as 'a new and terrible weapon in the battle of competition.' Outcomes of this have included: chronic levels of individual and institutional debt; an assault on labour rights and wages; new public management designed to impose authoritarian neoliberalism; ongoing attacks on social welfare and public goods; the exploitation of communities in the global South through commodity-dumping of exports and the extraction of skilled labour (Bruff 2014; Davies 2014).

In neoclassical economic models, the solutions proposed to systemic stagnation are a holistic re-focusing on ideas like Total Factor Productivity or Human Capital Theory, in order to increase profitability and to signal the selection of activities that are more productive (Hayek 1988). As a result, across HE demand emerges for a perfectly functioning market, inside which entrepreneurs can be persuaded to invest. Marketisation enables ideological narratives of student-as-entrepreneur or student-as-partner to emerge, and shapes the production and circulation of data as a means for encouraging the role of investment banks, technology firms, publishing houses, and so on, in developing alternative educational services that can be commodified. The key here is the ability to create a coercive

environment, inside which institutions and individuals become willing to invest in their own human capital, in order to become intensive, productive and socially-useful. However, the logic of responses to the secular crisis point towards ongoing market failures (Bellamy Foster and Yates 2014; Hall 2015a).

Marxist critiques stress that crisis is a function of quantitative barriers which become qualitative in nature (Clarke 1994; Jappe 2014). This connects to Holloway's (1992, p. 146) argument for seeing 'Marxism as an open theory of crisis'. For some the focus has been the collapse of production for profit (Carchedi and Roberts 2013; Mandel 1991), whilst for others it has been on underconsumption and inefficient demand (Harvey 2010, 2013). A third argument has been that Marx had no theory of crisis (Heinrich 2012). For Marx (1993), analyses of crisis are complex and highlight interrelationships between consumption, production and profitability. Issues to do with profitability, labour's share of social wealth, the anarchy of competition, and disconnections between the forces and relations of production mean that '[t]heories of pure disproportion are as wrong as those of pure under consumption' (*ibid.*, p. 751). Contradictions immanent to capitalist growth emerge from the demand for 'a rising rate of profit and an expanding market', which cannot be sustained because 'revolutions in technology and organisational development' *both* increase average labour productivity *and* subsequently reduce the amount of labour embedded in each commodity (*ibid.*). As a result, periodic crises of value are reflected in '[a]ccelerated capital accumulation', 'an increase in organic composition' of capital, 'a decline in the rate of profit', and weak investment (*ibid.*). This leads Mészáros (2010, p. 172) to note that structural crises reflect 'the activation of the absolute limits of capital as a mode of social metabolic reproduction'.

2.1.2 The Appearance of Academic Life

Crisis infects academic life, whilst enabling the system of capital to be presented as a natural, transhistorical solution that requires an ongoing process of structural reform. Such reform materially affects the discourse of education, what is valued inside education, and the relationships that

make education concrete. It also affects the idea of education as a public or social good, and as a result this ensures that the education sector of the economy is explicitly drawn into narratives of productivity. On first inspection, the practice and experience of HE is increasingly commodified and dominated by processes for financialisation and marketisation, with a specific focus on the *value* of university education for the individual and her family, for competing institutions, and for society more generally.

The discourse of value prioritises productivity and the economy, and fetishises: first, human capital instantiated through employability, entrepreneurship, longitudinal education outcomes and learning gain (DBIS 2015; McGettigan 2015; Hoareau McGrath et al. 2015); and second, competitive edge, realised through excellence, impact and outcome metrics (Britton et al. 2016). This has underscored a recalibration through both primary and secondary policy of the governance, regulation and funding of HE. However, an important driver has been the interconnection between education as an investment vehicle through individual and institutional debt, the role of finance capital, and the market in securitising those debts (Lazzarato 2013; McGettigan 2011). In the process of commodification, money binds and separates as 'the bond binding me to *human* life, binding society to me, connecting me with nature and man … the bond of all *bonds [and]* the universal *agent of separation?*' (Marx 1974, p. 121). Money provides a unifying, disciplinary language (Haiven and Khasnabish 2014).

For Tremblay et al. (2012, p. 41), these systemic interconnections are important because 'Students' learning outcomes are a key factor of institutional performance, and hence of aggregate system performance'. As a result, academic practices like curriculum design, delivery and assessment are affected by a need to quantify and valorise the performance of students and staff inside and outside the classroom. Valorisation pivots around the creation of marketised or tradable commodities, be they student employability or future earnings data, performance information about courses of study, forms of accreditation, or learning content (Hall 2015b). The production and circulation of data about current and predicted performance then enable a competitive HE market to emerge (US Department of Education 2015). However, as Britton et al. (2016)

highlight, a crucial issue is how to differentiate between competing providers, including evaluating their value-added contribution, rather than reinforcing established hierarchies and dominant positions, and ability bias.

Thus, HE policy points towards the importance of improving the quality of marketable data, in order to enable employers, institutions and credit agencies to make more informed judgements about individuals through risk-based analyses of past, present and potential performance. As a result, performance measurement and management bring the relationships that emerge in the classroom into stark relation to the market (Newfield 2016). The key moment in this process is the need to generate surplus value, through exchange and enterprise. What happens inside the classroom becomes a primary, societal concern that is dominated by exchange rather than social use, and governed by quality regimes rooted in the management of risk (Office for Students (OfS) 2018). Thus, for English HE, Government reforms have focused upon repayment of loans by course and institution, driven by human capital investment, which it argues will incentivise universities to deliver enterprise labour market outcomes (DBIS 2015).

2.1.3 Academic Labour as a Barrier

Inside an HE market, the key is that entrepreneurs are persuaded to invest so that low cost educational services are made available, that State-sponsored infrastructures are opened-up for investment, and that access is enabled through credit. Following Marx's (1992) work on the circulation of capital, these responses enable us to ask, to what is academic labour a barrier? The organisation of social labour, and the heightening of its social productivity, requires production on a large scale and on the advance of money capital in great quantities. As a result, marketisation, narratives of student-as-entrepreneur, the role of investment banks and publishing houses in developing alternative services using technology (including open education), and so on, each align with this need to create a demand for educational commodities and services. This innovative activity has also generated a movement of assets from populations to

corporations, alongside a concomitant projection of risk onto labour, as it is forced constantly to develop its knowledge, skills and capabilities, to overwork more intensively, and to take increasing responsibility for its own welfare and pensions. This underwrites the transfer of responsibility for recovering productivity from corporations to individuals or institutions who need to take on debt in order to become productive.

This transfer of systemic, structural risk, as a counter measure designed to maintain the autonomy of capital, has also infected sectors of the economy like education that were previously unproductive and not directly part of the valorisation process. Through technological and organisational innovation, capital raises the organic composition of previously unproductive or less productive sectors, including a vast expansion of the service sector in order to impose work over a wider terrain (Hudis 2012; Mandel 1991). In-part this also develops new spaces for both absolute and relative surplus value generation (Marx 1991, 2004). Thus, the commodification of previously socialised goods, like the curriculum and its assessment, is a form of 'internal colonisation' designed to ensure the social reproduction of capital (Jappe 2016, p. 71), and amplified by the creation of newly commodified services, like learning analytics, learning objects, and accreditation enabled through innovations like Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) (Hall 2015b). However, these measures have not been able to counteract the slide in productivity and the ongoing weak growth in the global North, which demonstrates the persistent inability of surplus capital to recombine with surplus labour, in order to valorise itself. Here the pre-eminence and power of monopoly finance capital is a drag on the productive capacity of the economy.

Cleaver (1993, 2000) has argued that these types of tactical countermeasures, rooted in monopoly finance capital, cannot resolve the barriers to productive expansion and accumulation, and instead degrade social metabolic control and equalise rates of exploitation (Mészáros 2015). For Marx (1993, pp. 705–06) these barriers ensure 'the collapse of production based on exchange value.' In a society based on production for exchange, mediated through the division of labour, private property and the market, this has implications for societal governance, where the maintenance of those mediations takes precedence over human life (Burkett 2015; Mészáros 2008). Thus, the desperate search for surplus-value has

created 'sacrifice zones' (Hedges and Sacco 2012), and a rise in surplus populations of precariously-employed, under-employed or unemployed (Hudis 2012; Jappe 2016; Lorey 2017). Moreover, the diversity of identities is used to divide labour within itself and to maintain an alienating system. The transfer of responsibility to the individual and the failure of capitalism to provide either full employment or greater equality mean that these very counter-measures undermine the legitimacy of the system as a whole (Robinson 2004), and encourage the development of alternatives rooted in anti-power (Holloway 2003). Crucially, this also includes the services and commodities produced or circulated by the University as it is made productive of value.

2.2 The Crisis of Value and HE

Increasingly, the funding of HE dominates its regulation and governance. It appears that the need to create surpluses and to support the vast expansion of institutional and student debt, or the rule of money, forms the heart of the system. However, when we move our analysis beyond structuring mediations like money and the market, it is possible to see them revealed as fetishes with limited explanatory power. A focus on money, and its relationship to information and data, enable us to understand both the material and ideological underpinnings of policy that reframes working practices through labour intensity and productivity. At this point we begin to understand how our individual and collective labour gives shape to social reproduction, and that we cannot expand our own standard of living, either in terms of meeting the necessities or luxuries of our lives, without being compelled to work more efficiently or intensively. This is because the expansion of those standards, in terms of the accumulation and consumption of new products, is critical to transnational, capitalist social reproduction.

The search for value gives form to production, circulation and consumption in capitalist society, and forms its motive energy, or at least its desperate search for energy in order to maintain the expansionist integrity of the system (Dyer-Witheford 2015). Value is the abstract and immaterial force that structures social reproduction and enables everyday

activity rooted in exchange. Value is abstract in that it cannot be touched, except through materialised forms like money that emerge in commodity exchange. It is not formed of concrete artefacts like books, coats or chairs, rather it emerges through a global market from the equalisation of the relationship between time and labour-power embedded in the production of those concrete commodities. This means that those producers who are able to work cooperatively, or through more efficient technology, or in new markets, in order to reduce production time have a competitive advantage. In this way, we might speak of the universe of value as a form of motion (Dinerstein and Neary 2002) that is shaped by labour as 'the living, form-giving fire' governed by the relationship between labour-power as a commodity and 'living time' (Marx 1993, p. 361). The motion of expansion of the universe of value emerges from *both* the ability of capitalists to squeeze more of this form-giving fire out of both an expanding and time-limited working day, *and* the opportunities that exist for overcoming barriers to the collapse of production for profit. It is the search for enhanced or enriched value that gives impetus to technological innovation and organisational development, and to the export of those innovations to new markets (Clarke 1994; Rubin 1972). This leads Cleaver (2017, pp. 12, 16) to characterise the labour theory of value as a theory of the value of labour to capital; as the fundamental means of social organisation and control through the imposition of work.

Thus, a secular contraction in that universe of value forces capital to open up new markets or to marketise existing socialised provision. It becomes a secular crisis in the moment that the subordination of life to work, or the refusal of labour to accept lower wages, unemployment or precarious employment, leads to rupture (*ibid.*). Such ruptures, witnessed in student occupations (Myers 2017) or struggles for pension rights, sick pay and holidays by professional services staff (3 cosas 2015), demonstrate that whilst value attempts to commodify all of life, 'it will never be able to because such a society would be completely unliveable' (Jappe 2014, p. 12). Thus, the secular crisis of capitalism is a crisis of the value-form, in terms of the production of value and its intellectual legitimacy. This has ramifications for academics because their labour is increasingly subsumed or re-engineered for value production, and as their labour-power is increasingly recognised as a commodity with the potential to

generate new products, through spin-outs, impact, knowledge transfer or knowledge exchange. As a result, academic labour is redefined under the structural domination of commodity capitalists, such that they have to vie for a place on the market.

2.2.1 Abstract and Concrete Academic Labour

Moreover, these relations and forms are at once both abstract and concrete, with each informing the production and reproduction of the other. Abstract labour is a form of measurement operating across the terrain of capital, which enables units of work to be compared as time (in production and circulation) and therefore as value. Abstract labour does not care about what the work is, merely that it enables surplus-value to be extracted and embedded inside commodities that can be exchanged. Concrete labour appears as the production of specific, useful things or skills, but it exists in relation to abstract labour and is mediated by its abstract form, just as the abstract is mediated by its useful counterpart. This is because useful, social practice or products are only useful inside a system of capital because they can be exchanged and have value.

This appears on the surface of society to be a set of relationships that are mediated and abstracted by money (the cost of a degree is reduced to a fee that acts as a representation of value) and by the law (in terms of requirements for published data, or access to/control of a market). For many academics, abstract labour rooted in exchange-value feels less meaningful or truthful than the concrete form of academic labour rooted in self-critical, scholarly work. However, inside a global education market and against the structuring realities of surplus-value and money, it becomes difficult to move beyond the alienation of both concrete and abstract academic labour because neither can be properly decoded. As the concrete and the abstract are objectified '[t]he structure of alienated social relations which characterize capitalism has the form of a quasi-natural antinomy in which the social and historical do not appear' (Postone 1980, p. 109).

This is the dialectical relation between the abstract and the concrete, which is both historical and material, and which is subsuming academic

life as labour inside a terrain of value-production and accumulation. Without an analysis of the ways that *both* concrete *and* abstract academic labour are manifest in capitalist social relations and are generative of value, there is no way that crises can be overcome. In a society in which commodification has taken on a totalising role, it becomes impossible to define an alternate value-form beyond that which rests on the expansion of surplus-value. Thus, for Marx (1991, p. 358) 'the true barrier to capitalist production is capital itself', because capital as value-in-motion can only imagine its own valorisation standing-in for our collective social reproduction, or sociability. Production exists for the valorisation of capital, and not for other forms of social wealth. This means that in order to drive surplus-value production and accumulation, there is an ongoing need to undermine the costs of variable capital and to develop the social productivity of labour. As a result, an ever expanding amount of total, social capital is required 'to set the same quantity of labour-power in motion and to absorb the same amount of surplus labour' (*ibid.*, p. 328). These barriers to the production of value are amplified through the 'complete anarchy' of competition (*ibid.*, p. 1021), which appears to be a natural law that forces labour to dissociate from crises of social reproduction. As Postone (1993, p. 313) argues, the resolution of crises 'will be hindered so long as value remains the determining form of social wealth'.

2.2.2 Time

The separation of abstract from concrete labour, and the domination of the former over all productive life, is governed by time (Marx 2004; Postone 1993). The global comparability of labour based upon homogenised units of time is rooted in the competitive desire to extract surpluses, most notably surplus-value, or that increment of the labour-power sold by the labourer to the capitalist for which she receives no remuneration. It is that increment that the capitalist seeks to grow through: an attrition on wages; an increase in the technical composition of capital (by bringing more efficient production methods to bear); imposing cooperation; or by extending the working day.

The University enmeshed in the market becomes a source of value and also seeks out value from new markets, in relation to the average time it

takes academic labour to produce, circulate or exchange commodities. One outcome is that this time-based competition, operating in national and transnational markets, damages the sociability and solidarity of the academic's wider communities. Thus, the labour time deemed socially-necessary for academic production in a specific institution, in relation to a global, average level of skill, technology and organisational development, increasingly dominates the life of the academic (Marx 2004). This domination is made worse as the University is subsumed under value accumulation, because the academic means of production are necessarily revolutionised through technological and organisational change. This leads to speed-up, impact measures, always-on technologies, performance or lean management, the use of learning analytics or data mining, and so on, in order that the productivity of the academic can be measured against her peers through the socially-necessary labour time that determines what her productivity *should* be.

Thus, for Postone (1993, p. 191), 'socially necessary labor time expresses a quasi-objective social necessity' that confronts academics as 'the temporal dimension of the abstract domination that characterizes the structures of alienated social relations in capitalism'. In the reproduction of social metabolic control, through the imposition of abstract labour, '*time becomes necessity*' (*ibid.*). In a competitive, transnational educational market, academic labour rights will be threatened by the equalising pressures of socially-necessary labour time as it enables the value-form to be instantiated inside institutions.

2.2.3 The Academic Commodity

A stripping back of the layers of capitalist reproduction, through money and data, intensity and productivity, abstract labour and labour-power, and surplus-value, move us towards an understanding of the alienating universe of value. Debates about education and debt, student-as-consumer or purchaser, performance management and executive pay, the role of private providers and deregulated markets, the allocation of research and teaching income, lack any meaning without reference to the social metabolic control imposed through the value-form. For Postone (1980, p. 108) this means an analysis that can differentiate 'between what

modern capitalism is and the way it appears, between its essence and appearance'. Critical here is finding a means of decoding how relations of educational production and the educational commodities that are produced socially are externalised and take the form of fetishes.

One outcome of this drive is the need to commodify *both* pedagogy *and* academic relationships. *Pace* Marx (1993), education's role in commodity formation and exchange is critical because the commodity is the social form against which every capital can be considered. The global circuit of educational commodities is the form of motion common to all educational capitals. It is social only in that it forms the total social capital of the capitalist class, as it is restructuring education transnationally. Moreover, the movement of individual educational capitals is conditioned by its relationship to other educational capitals, be they public universities or private, for-profit colleges. This is a material relation underscored by categories of the commodity, competition, surplus value extraction and accumulation, financialisation, and the rate of profit.

The crisis of the value-form in HE recalibrates academic labour as social activity mediated by the exchange-value of its commodities (Marx 2004). Wendling (2009, p. 52) notes 'the social tyranny of exchange-value' structures production based on profit rather than use, and strengthens the abstract power of second-order mediations. As Marx argues (1974, p. 101), this is driven by materialised value in the form of money, which is 'the real need created by the modern economic system', and which 'reduces everything to its own form of abstraction', such that 'the expansion of production and needs becomes the inventive and ever calculating slave of inhuman, refined, unnatural and imaginary appetites.' It is against this tyranny that the value of academic labour, in the costs of its labour-power, the research/teaching products that it creates, and the relationships that it enables and maintains, might usefully be discussed and re-evaluated (Neary 2012).

2.3 The Subsumption of Higher Education

In overcoming crises, Clarke (1994) argued that capital needs to create the conditions for renewed surplus value production through the control of labour power and the means of production in appropriate proportions.

Thus, labour productivity and the ability to get educational commodities to market more efficiently, or turning those commodities over in the market more quickly, are critical (Lapavitsas 2013). For Marx (2004, p. 645) these responses turn on the capability and capacity of businesses to move beyond the production of absolute surplus value by simply colonising new markets or extending the length of the working day, enabled by 'the formal subjection of labour to capital'. Instead the focus shifts to the production of relative surplus value through revolutions in the 'technical processes of labour and the composition of society' enabled 'by the real subjection of labour to capital' (*ibid.*). Here, competitive advantage is gained by those businesses that can revolutionise their production processes, so that they produce in less labour time than that which is socially necessary. This also revolutionises the relations of production through new labour relations and working conditions.

The formal and real subjection of labour to capital was theorised by Marx in terms of subsumption: first through an analysis of the production process as the real basis of ideology in *The German Ideology* (Marx and Engels 1998); and then in relation to the Results of the Direct Production Process in the *Economic Manuscripts of 1861–64* (Marx 1994). This theorisation engages with the production of value in both *Volume 1 of Capital* (Marx 2004) and *The Grundrisse* (Marx 1993). In the former he analyses the idea of social labour, whilst in the latter we are able to draw connections between capital's domination of labour and its co-option of the general intellect, or knowledge that is useful at the level of society. The development of subsumption as a category is a process of transformation, rather than a specific periodisation (Endnotes 2010), which rests upon the relationships between valorisation and abstract labour (Postone 2012), and capital's co-option of the general intellect (Vercellone 2007).

It is possible to consider the ongoing objectification of academic labour in terms of the concepts of absolute and relative surplus value, and their alignment with the processes of formal and real subsumption. Under formal subsumption, potential crises of underconsumption and profit can be ameliorated by working academic labour longer, although crises cannot be indefinitely addressed in this way, and indeed this tends to increase crises of overwork and ill-health. The limits reached under formal subsumption, in terms of the restricted amount of absolute surplus value

available for accumulation, do not enable the free form of capital. The real subsumption of labour under capital therefore focuses on the application of more productive technologies or techniques that restore competitive advantage and relative surplus value. This gives the innovator a momentary advantage in being able to ameliorate her labour costs against the average socially-necessary time required for the production of a specific commodity. However, once the innovation is spread more generally, the innovator loses her advantage, and the socially-necessary labour time for commodity-production is recalibrated (Marx 2004). However, this also transforms a crisis of overwork into a crisis of anxiety as individuals are forced to compete (Hall and Bowles 2016).

The real subsumption of academic labour increases its technical content and further proletarianises its existence, such that the production of value is instantiated as the motive force. As a result, we witness data-driven discourses of excellence, impact and student satisfaction, reinforced through corporate governance, performance management and the commodification of the curriculum, with a focus upon the generation of human capital. Processes of commodification emerge against competitive strategies defined by metrics and performance indicators as proxy measures of quality assurance, which can be compared through benchmarks and global rankings for subjects and institutions (DET 2016; OfS 2018). In this moment, academic labour's essence contribute to capital's emergence as a social totality. Through innovations in technology and organisational development, academic labour is subsumed under the drive to reproduce abstract labour for exchange value (Marx 2004). Thus, real subsumption fundamentally transforms the meaning and practice of academic work, and renders meaningless any discussion of the public good of HE. As Marx (2004, p. 502) states, '[t]he worker has been appropriated by the process', and this recalibration 'becomes the most unfailing means for turning the whole lifetime of a worker and his family into labour-time at capital's disposal for its own valorisation' (*ibid.*, pp. 531–2).

This then continually transforms 'not only the technical basis of production but also the functions of the worker and the social combinations of the labour process', including the division of labour (*ibid.*, p. 617). Moreover, it tends to an increase in precarious employment, and the need for constant reskilling by academic labourers who are required to bear the

risks around generating surpluses. This includes the ability to respond to changes in industrial strategies, the requirements of business and policy makers for specific skills and knowledge, new disciplinary requirements and excellence frameworks, the demands of knowledge transfer and impact, and so on. As Marx (*ibid.*) argues, this 'necessitates variation of labour, fluidity of functions, and mobility of the worker in all directions.' This increases the compulsion for academics to overwork as a defensive action against proletarianisation, casualisation and precarity, alongside national strategies focused upon productivity. Thus, real subsumption demands the constant reinvention of the academic self (Berardi 2009; Vercellone 2007), which in turn challenges our conceptions of the essence of academic labour and the spaces in which it is performed. As challenging is the appearance of these processes as natural, such that academics are forced to become self-exploiting entrepreneurs, in order to avoid being labelled as unproductive. The recalibration of the skills, practices and knowledge of academics and students, whose labour is at once concrete and abstract, useful and used for exchange, is a crisis for the individual academic.

This crisis reflects the fact that valorisation ensures that subjectivity and autonomy rest with capital alone, such that prior expectations of academic autonomy or freedom are meaningless. Marx (1993, p. 650) notes that 'It is not the individuals who are set free by free competition; it is, rather, capital which is set free.' Once set free to reproduce itself for value, capital then subordinates the landscape of production, so that the creative power of an individual's labour 'establishes itself as the power of capital, as an *alien power* confronting [her]' (*ibid.*, p. 307). Marx (*ibid.*, pp. 307–08) is clear that the re-engineering of social production through processes of subsumption, through which 'science, inventions, divisions and combinations of labour, improved means of communication, creation of the world market, machinery etc.' become objective powers, inflates the universe of value and diminishes labour.

Academic labour is central to the reproduction of these objective powers across a social terrain, and to the renewal of forces of production that themselves come into tension with existing relations of production in specific sectors of the economy. In the education sector, there is pressure from the emerging circuits of money capital, production capital and commodity capital, which are seeking to revolutionise the forces of pro-

duction that drive surplus labour, as well as transforming the relations of production through precarious employment, risk-based approaches to relationships, performance management and so on (Marx 1992). As these circuits mature and their effects amplify, the money relation enables an individual's labour-power, and therefore her *surplus labour*, to be 'appropriated' by capitalists who own 'the conditions of labour'. This then begins the process of economic dependency rooted in concrete or objectified labour aimed at intensifying labour and its conditions, in order to drive down socially-necessary labour time (Marx 1994).

2.4 HE and Categorical Crisis

The crisis of HE is a representation of a crisis of social reproduction, or sociability. It is a crisis of wealth. In an addition to *Volume 3 of Capital* (Marx 1991, p. 707), Engels reveals the categories that define social wealth through capitalist relations of production: mediations like private property; the relationship between concrete and abstract labour embodied in use-value and exchange-value; the realisation of wealth through money. In times of crisis, our appreciation and engagement with these categories enters a moment of extreme stress, because through apparent scarcity of wealth the fetishised nature of the commodity is exacerbated at the same time that its value has been questioned. In the current secular crisis, these tensions becomes a barrier to our social experience of education as HE is redefined as a positional good rooted in the development of human capital, and as academic labour is redefined around its exchange-value, in order to generate institutional surpluses. Increasingly, academic practice is defined categorically through crisis as 'human labour in the abstract' (Marx 2004, p. 241).

The categories against which we evaluate and understand our lives, such as our work (not yet our labour or labour-power), are distorted by money, which 'is all other commodities divested of their shape, the product of their universal alienation' (Marx 2004, p. 205). Money parasitises the content of our lives, and the categories which give it shape. As the politics of austerity reshaped public services like education through debt-fuelled study and engagement with bond markets, this toxic colonisation

of educational life is amplified, and reveals estrangement from educational contexts where individuals do not have the money or the commodities to enable their social mobility. Thus, we witness student protests against education reforms, for instance in Kenya in the 1980s and 1990s, in England in 2010–11, in Québec in 2012, and in France in 2018. Moreover, it recalibrates the production of academic products, like teaching texts, assessment transcripts or portfolios, and research outputs, such that whilst they are useful in and of themselves, their production is predicated upon generating new forms of exchange or profit. The crisis for the individual academic is how to respond as capital seeks to reduce the costs of employing her labour power through technology and organisational change, whilst at the same time it demands new forms of entrepreneurial activity so that it can develop new, tradable commodities.

In this movement of contradictions the explanatory power of the openness of Marxist categories emerges (Bonefeld et al. 1995; Holloway 1995). This is an open critique of the structuring categories that are internal to capital's domination of our lives, and the ways in which it attempts to become the autonomous, self-valorising subject. Here, the interrelation of theory and practice strip back the layers of exploitation, in order to uncover its Genesis. The categorical tensions that erupt in the relationship between education and mode of social reproduction are brought into sharp relationship by an engagement with praxis as an historical and material process (Rikowski 2004). This process seeks to abolish educational commodity-fetishism, rooted in human capital, entrepreneurship, excellence, impact and so on, by understanding the categories that constitute education in capitalism. One possibility is that praxis as a pedagogical process can be dissolved into the fabric of society, as common sense (the University of Utopia, n.d.; The University of Strategic Optimism 2011).

Such a categorical analysis reflects Marx's (2004, p. 799) description of 'the torment of labour, slavery, ignorance, brutalisation and moral degradation'. It strips back the appearance of academic practice, as performance management, overwork, precarity and ill-health, and situates it against the ongoing assault on labour rights, to reveal the impulse for money and surplus that drives this appearance. This can then be situated against the second-order mediations that realise social wealth in the form of money, such as the division of academic labour, education as a private

good, and commodity-exchange. However, these are grounded in the need to drive surplus-value in absolute or relative terms, and which drive the reengineering of universities for competitive advantage. Such competitive advantage is possible because in order to survive, individuals must alienate their labour-power over and over, in order to maintain or enhance their standard of living and access goods necessary for their social reproduction.

Too often the analysis stops at the level of appearance, and there is a tendency to seek redress in technocratic or organisational reform, or in terms of abstract reason related to academic freedom. For academics, there is a lamentation for the concrete labour or the use-value of their work as a public good (CDBU n.d.; Collini 2012, 2017). At their worst these lamentations decry the loss of autonomy or freedom, whilst being unable to address its historic limitations and its structural causes (Furedi 2017; Williams 2016). However, these positions are historically and materially 'impotent in the face of capital', and offer no direction towards post-capitalism (Postone 1980, p. 115). As Gorz (1982, p. 73) argues 'liberation can only be crossed at the price of a radical break based on a different rationality… [that] embodies the rejection of accumulation.' Yet, the law of value is ignored in favour of intellectual elitism that ignores the atomisation and performance management that drives precarious employment and compliance. As academic labour is folded into the transnational circuits of commodity capitalism, the duality of its abstract and concrete nature is realised inside-and-against the categories that define it, namely the commodity, money, labour-power and value. Both abstract and concrete labour and their manifestations in use and exchange, are rooted in the production, circulation and accumulation of value, and in capital's drive for self-valorisation that appears to close the horizon of possibility for generating alternatives.

2.5 The Crisis of the Institution

2.5.1 Competition

The lived experience inside institutions re-engineered through the crisis of value drives a globalised terrain upon which universities now exist as

competing capitals. The relationship between the University and its staff/students is mediated through:

- the recalibration of disciplines, mediated by market-oriented, league table data as a forms of metricisation that directs performance and justified in terms of value-for-money and consumer protection (OfS 2018);
- the commodification of curriculum enhancement, including curriculum content, student support services, and assessment, so that services can be defined around these components, enriched by performance data that is available for the market (Rizvi et al. 2013);
- efficiencies in service-provision, for example through outsourcing, privatisation or cloud-based services (Newfield 2016);
- utilising debt-fuelled student life and expectations to drive personalisation, employability and an entrepreneurial identity (Lazzarato 2013);
- enforced international competition either through traditional mechanisms like overseas campus provision, or through virtual, technocratic innovation (Hall 2015b);
- the enforcement of mobility and flexibility as a means of leveraging surplus value from employees (McMillan Cottom 2016);
- the utilisation of high-risk, financialised growth strategies, for example medium/high yield bonds (McGettigan 2011);
- opening up institutional spaces to connect the research and development imperatives of globalised capital for securing new terrains for accumulation, including data mining or makerspace-type research (Newfield 2016);
- the reskilling of global labour as a commodified workforce through employability strategies that are underwritten by digital competence (Learning Wales 2018);
- underwriting the jurisdictional imperatives of globalised capital by suppressing academic dissent, or investing in security/policing functions (Özkirimli 2017); and
- the reduction of trust-based classroom relationships to risk management in the development of human capital, rather than to acts of care (Amsler 2015).

Collective action is confronted and marginalised by a focus on personal aspiration and choice as an entrepreneurial activity. As a result, the University becomes a node in a global productive infrastructure with a concentration of services, knowledge, finance and technology in the global North and of productive labour in the global South. As Robinson (2004) notes, this underpins a dominant global culture that co-opts, coerces and reshapes cultural institutions, group identities and mass consciousness. This is the brutal reality of the idea that there is no alternative to the law of value as the organising principle for social life, enforced by competition.

Engels (2009) railed against competition because it separates human beings and sets them against each other, through the measurement and management of performance that imposes more work (Foucault 1975). Moreover, it forces people to deny the existence or subjectivity of others (Ahmed 2012; Taylor 2016). In an increasingly competitive sector, the spaces open to academic labour for recombination for alternative social uses are increasingly kettled by 'an antagonism that emanates from the *individuals social conditions of existence*' (Marx 1987, p. 21). As a result, the social, use value of academic labour lies in asymmetrical relation to the institutional, exchange value, which demands that academic processes and activities are repurposed as commodities (Caffentzis 2010).

These structural realities shine a light on the ways in which the crisis of value is infecting university life. In particular, it is important to recognise that institutional life in terms of Marx's (1992) focus on the associational phase of capital, in which development emerges on a global terrain, with an interrelationship between commercial and money-dealing capital and productive capital. This reflects his (1991, 2004) contention that capital would flow across sectors in the search for profitability, and that productive transformations in one sphere of activity would spillover into other spheres. This materially affects how we define the idea of the higher education institution. Those who direct the university for the market are not simply Vice-Chancellors, but include associations of policy makers, private equity fundholders, credit rating agencies, technology firms and publishers, and, indirectly, fee-paying students (Szadkowski 2016). These groups form a deterritorialised, transnational activist network (Ball 2012).

2.5.2 The Rule of Finance Capital

The expropriation of surplus value from producers by merchant capital is a primary source of profit, and in educational production it is leveraged through the use of finance capital and credit to increase the rate of turnover of specific educational commodities and services-as-commodities. This has a variety of manifestations, including: the on-line production and circulation of curriculum content; the corporate funding of research centres; knowledge exchange and transfer; the outsourcing of physical and technological infrastructures; the deployment of learning analytics; and the management and sale of the student loan book. Universities are being reconstructed inside the equivalent of joint-stock companies, subject to the coercive logic of competition for research grants and student numbers, which themselves generate a reified power revealed in institutional credit ratings (Moody's 2017). Here, the crisis of the value-form exposes a tension from the increasingly limited spaces that are available for productive as opposed to rentier or interest-bearing capital (Lazzarato 2013), which does not catalyse conditions of expansion, rather 'backward conditions' that are parasitic and 'alien' to production (Marx 1992, p. 444).

The University then becomes a space inside which commercial capital and money capital dissolve previous forms of production and destroy the communities on which they were based (Harvey 2013). As a result, money capital and its characteristics define the academic community through: increasingly precarious working conditions for outsourced employees; an attrition on the labour rights of those producing the raw materials that go into the production/delivery of academic services, skills and knowledge; organisational development through new public management methodologies; and the proliferation of zero-hour contracts, precarious employment for hourly-paid or postgraduates/adjunct staff. Here, the focus is on the generation and maintenance of a surplus academic population disciplined through global labour arbitrage.

2.5.3 The Hopeless University

Ideologically, the public university is declared to be beyond hope and is under global pressure to become revolutionised as an organisational form

for the accumulation of capital (PA Consulting 2018). This leaves academics at risk as the University's much-vaunted institutional autonomy abstracts it from a notion of public good and distances it from any socialised purpose (Thorburn 2012). Instead, risk-based, data-driven forms of performance management infect the relationships between students, teachers and professional service staff, and enable a re-composition of the relation between capital and labour. Cleaver (2000, p. 153) argues that in the United States, any crisis in the mediation of the law of value inside educational contexts underscores 'the current attempt by capital to reimpose work discipline in the schools through the fiscal crisis and the nation-wide restructuring of education'. In part, the imposition of academic work is managed through instrumental, institutional policies grounded in risk-based approaches to corporate governance, including codes of conduct, absence and workload management, capability procedures, and the proper use of social media.

One apparent mode for recovering the value of the University is by revolutionising the forces of production as a means of reinforcing the disciplinary terrain of work. Technology enables the barriers to capital accumulation imposed by time and space to be overcome (Marx 1993), and thereby enables capital to escape its reliance on labour-power by increasing its technical, organic composition, until it reaches its limits in both absolute and relative surplus-value production (Marx 2004). This tension is hugely problematic for society, because institutions continue to use technology to replace labour-power and yet the value of a commodity is underpinned by labour. As a result, there is a constant, competitive demand to develop productive capability, and to increase the amount of total social capital that can set a given amount of labour-power to work. For capital, the diffusion of technology across an interconnected network of formal and informal educational settings, is amplified by networks of venture capitalists, technology firms and publishers. For labour, the risk for educational and therefore economic success it is transferred to the individual through the institutional demands for enriched human capital.

Educational technology underwrites capital's constant breaking down of the barriers to the circuits of consumption and production, and its '[c]onstant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of

all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation' (Marx and Engels 2002, p. 13). This is the ongoing objectification of academic life under capitalist social relations, which reveal human's 'active relation' to nature and the production of life, including its social relations and immanent 'mental conceptions' (Marx 2004, p. 493, n. 4). Objectification emerges from the deployment of technologies that: manage curriculum content like lecture capture; monitor academic and student engagement and attainment, like learning analytics; digitise assessment processes; and focus upon digital capability. This tends to increase the technical composition of work, through the appropriation of the general intellect by capital through the application of science (Marx 1993). One outcome of this process was the use of technologies to open-up and monitor labour in order that production processes could be systematised and made more lean or efficient, or indeed proletarianised.

Proletarianisation renders institutions hopeless spaces for addressing the wider ramifications of the crisis of value. The University framed by a secular crisis of the value-form remains unable to address fundamental global problems like climate change, because its interaction with the world is mediated through the market, the division of labour and commodity-exchange. This reinforces a metabolic rift between institutions acting in society and nature (Burkett 2015). The transformations that are required to engage with these problems demand critical, radical, pedagogical processes of becoming, and yet HE institutions are increasingly divorced from the possibility of contributing to solutions. It is increasingly unclear how these institutions and their curricula enable global societies to adapt through collective, educational repair. This is precisely because HE institutions are limited to their ability to coerce individuals in placing their labour-power for sale in the market. As a result, our institutions can only become more efficiently unsustainable.

2.6 The Crisis of the Individual

Mann (2008, pp. 77–79) highlights the mechanisms through which institutions enforce arbitrarily legitimated cultures: the increasingly homogenous training for academics; the standardisation of their perfor-

mance management; the systematic application of codes of practice that encourage routinised educational practices; the neutralisation of knowledge as opposed to its embodied reality; and the symbolic violence and mis-recognition of specific identities. Moreover, Mann (*ibid*, pp. 85–87) looks at how these forms of institutional, cultural capital enforce certain behaviours inside universities in relation to: hierarchy and authority; the instantiation of power amongst a limited group of supervisors whose status must be reinforced at all times; the stereotyping of staff considered to be working against cultural norms; restricted mobility across supervisory boundaries; an increasing focus on programmed activity that is tightly scheduled and imposed systematically; and a lack of transparency about performance management. For Gorz (1982, p. 24) these processes further the dispossession of individuals from knowledge, skills and products, and forces them: first, to carry out work in a pre-determined, impersonal way, which can be abstracted and measured at the level of society; or second to trade on the bastardisation of their selves as entrepreneurs, who Marx (1974, pp. 101, 102) felt exploited the 'appetites' of others as a 'service of love'.

With limited or no ownership over their increasingly homogenised work that is denuded of its specificity, the focus for academic labourers increasingly becomes the management of their ongoing proletarianisation. Proletarianisation has become a crisis both for academics whose identities are delegitimised in the process (Gabriel and Tate 2017). There is a risk that responses form lamentations that push towards academic exceptionalism and a reified idea of HE as a public good. This occurs at a time when any essentialist preconceptions about academic labour are being eviscerated by precarious employment, the threat of technological unemployment, and the transfer of risk in the generation of surpluses to labour. As a result, for some academics choices are limited to: constant overwork; constant reinvention; or exodus and reincorporation inside alternative forms of academic entrepreneurialism, like consultancy and gig work.

The systemic demand for normalisation increases the possibility that individuals will be made marginal or coerced into hegemonic forms of behaviour (Amsler and Motta 2017; Emejulu 2017a, b; Lorey 2017) or will be simply unable to move beyond myriad, intersectional barriers

(Strayhorn 2012). As second-order mediations take on a transhistorical and natural appearance, the reduction of life to abstract time imposes hegemonic norms on individuals (Dunayevskaya 1978). In a system predicated upon an expansion of the value-form this is central to social reproduction, and Marx (2004, p. 280) argues 'Selfishness, gain and private interest of competing individuals, comes together in the common interest, and looks like an invisible hand.' However, the common interest is rooted in asymmetrical power relations that privilege white, male, able, heterosexual norms as representative of a productive life. This tends to be normalised inside competing institutions through the application of routinised codes and practices, and specific forms of workload and performance management.

For individual academics, these codes and practices shape myriad boundaries that amplify the pain of silencing and delegitimisation. Moreover, they are concrete manifestations of abstract systems of oppression that form and are formed of the ongoing reproduction of capital. As Marx notes (1991, p. 350), it is only where the development of the productive forces, as differential modes of exploitation, forms a barrier to the expansion of capital, that the form of oppression and exploitation is transformed. Thus, in a moment of crisis where the development of the productive forces cannot reinstate stable forms of accumulation, capital imposes more precarious work, with differential impacts (Haiven and Khasnabish 2014). Marx (1993, p. 409) stresses the interrelationship between 'universal industriousness' and 'exploitation through general utility', and this is experienced differentially, with women, people of colour, those classed as dis-abled, and the working class, increasingly placed in ongoing moments of stress.

In the present moment, capital's own rationale appears to be the imposition of work in spite of a collapse in social wealth, which delegitimises the system at the level of the group and the individual. Thus, the imposition of debt-fuelled study for a world of work that appears to be collapsing or lacking returns, exacerbates the contradictions between necessary and superfluous work, between concrete waste and abstract wealth. These movements become pedagogical and form a disciplinary activity at the level of society, for instance because academic labour needs indebted students for its own existence (Lazzarato 2013). Inside the crisis of value, the

individual academic experience is increasingly that her practice 'has no meaning other than to keep people occupied' (Gorz 1982, p. 73). This is the reality of an equalisation of differential rates of exploitation, and it leads Moten and Harney (2013) to highlight how the University exists as a mode of denial, consisting of a range of refugee colonies. The radical or subversive intellectual who is the striving for her own subjectivity is *in* but not *of* the University (Lazzarato 2013).

In moving beyond hopelessness and estrangement, the categorical nature of academic labour becomes central in moving beyond its fetishised nature. Whilst it is important to critique the conditions and relations of production inside the University, and to recognise the differential levels of exploitation experienced intersectionally, it is also crucial to look at how social reproduction underscores these conditions and experiences. As Gregory and Winn argue (2016, p. 2) 'the problem is capitalist labor', reinforced by a constant, generalised intellectual dismissal of the possibility for an alternative mode of social metabolic control. Such an intellectual dismissal is fundamental in normalising social metabolic control that denies marginalisation in relation to race, ethnicity and gender, for instance in black student achievement and continuation, the prevalence of whiteness across curricula, and low numbers of black and female professors (McMillan Cottom 2016). As Emejulu (2017a) notes, 'to speak of universities is to recognise them as spaces of exclusion and discrimination which hide their epistemic violence behind a rhetoric of meritocracy, collegiality and the 'free exchange of ideas'. Crucially, as the equalisation of differential rates of exploitation normalises the systemic violence experienced by academics with intersecting narratives, the possibilities for alternative modes of being and becoming emerge. However, first we must reflect on how our labour-power is used coercively to deny our own and others' subjectivity.

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3

Alienation

3.1 Situating Alienation

Alienation erupts from the disconnection between political economy and human richness (Holloway 2003). Its realisation is driven by estrangement and loss catalysed by what it takes to produce an individual life in capitalist society. It is driven by the divorce of self from those processes of production. Moreover, alienation erupts from the enforced, disciplinary disconnection between ways of explaining and making the world (Marx 1974; Marx and Engels 1998), such that human capacities remain divorced or separated out. As a result, wealth is deformed by 'the intrinsic connection between private property, greed, the separation of labor, capital and landed property; the connection of exchange and competition, of value and the devaluation of man, of monopoly and competition, etc. (Marx 1974, p. 63). This system of alienation demands ever more human energy to maintain its integrity and expansive power on a planetary scale (Burkett 2014). As a result, alienation defines the relationship between individuals under capitalist relations of production, in terms of the production of academic knowledge, the academic labour process, the academic self and academic identity. An analysis of alienation works as a heuristic *both* for forms of oppression and dispossession, *and* for moments

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of struggle, grounded in the reintegration of the individual's life, desires and activities with her essence (Marx 1974).

My argument flows from a realist appreciation of Marx's work, in relation to knowledge-making as potentially progressive, humanitarian practice. As such, my analysis does not specifically address what has been termed the epistemological break between Marx's early and mature works, although I recognise the move to deny or drop the validity of the earlier, humanist approach, which is often viewed as a developmental working-out, and therefore prone to mistakes. However, I view his critique as emerging over time, such that the *Grundrisse* and *Capital* continue to discuss the context and reality of alienated labour, in particular through an engagement with the indignity of commodity fetishism. In turn, this enables Marx and those humanist critical theorists who followed, to situate the political economy of commodity society against descriptions of deformed human reality, of families being thrown under the juggernaut of capital, of capital as a vampire or werewolf, and so on.

Below it will be argued that Marx's terminology around alien, alienation, estrangement and so on does shift. However, the focus of my analysis is less on any formal break and more on the continuing importance of alienation as a heuristic for explaining our inhumane experience of the world. This position places Marx's work in the context of other intellectual practice, which develops over time and which shifts in focus as expertise and experience develops. This does not mean that earlier work get denied or dropped, simply that it is integrated and incorporated in new ways. Thus, it is possible to question the ways in which alienation and estrangement become integrated into our wider investigation of academic work, and thereby to open-up possibilities for analysing a wider range of contributions or inputs to the lived experience of intellectual, human life.

3.1.1 Language and Genealogy

Any discussion of alienation is framed by specific terms, which are contested in the translation from German into English. These contestations have placed Marx's use of alienation under some stress in the literature, and it has been claimed that he had no clear definition or approach,

meaning that in his later work it was dropped (Le Baron 1971; Löwith 1954; Schoolman 1973). Moreover, in some analyses it became a meaningless term because of its allegedly homogenised application to a range of contexts (Ludz 1975; Schacht 1970; Schweitzer 1982), or the sense in which socialist planning or perfectly functioning markets would eliminate it (Bell 1959; Elliott 1975; Goldmann 1959; Hayek 2001; Roberts 1971; von Mises 2006). For others, alienation has formed a clear line of analysis throughout Marx's work: through its revelation in productive activity (Postone 1993; Wendling 2009), grounded in the exploitation of alienated labour (Clarke 1991; Hudis 2012); through its interconnection to ideas of reification and fetishism (Holloway 2003); or in enabling us to explain forms of social metabolic control and the mediation of life inside capitalism (Mészáros 2005).

Musto (2010) has been very clear about the ways in which the concept of alienation, framed by specific meanings of the word, have shifted in line with discourses rooted in social reproduction. These have been framed: in religious terms, in the relationship between a reified God and the original sin of humans, critiqued by Feuerbach (2008); in Rousseau's (2003) analysis of the value of the social contract in purifying the relationship between private property and a fallible society; in analyses of individual liberty (Mill 2003); and in terms of the ideological demands of bourgeois political economy to justify enclosure and separation through private property rights (Smith 2008). A focus has been upon human essence, how the idea of humanity has been created and sustained, and whether it exists only partially, in a stunted or fragmented form, which points towards the possibility of a recombination through unity. In this way, ideas of human essence are defined by projections onto the *other*, be that a metaphysical God, a capitalist entrepreneur, or an immigrant defined as the opposite of that which we should be. In this search for human essence, there is a relationship between: *being* as a fixed, static thing composed of skills, capabilities, and knowledge; and, *becoming* as a process of living, composed of one's relationships to oneself, to others and to the material world. Thus, alienation serves to highlight the disconnections between conceptions of the world rooted in self and other, self and world, self and material production, and human capital and human richness.

Genealogies of alienation highlight the spaces and times in which the term re-emerges (Musto 2010). For Smith (2008), the character of human nature was mutilated or deformed where individuals were unable to develop their own intellectual faculties. He could not situate such mutilation against the relationship between the individual and her productive relations in society, instead representing it as an individual defect. Hegel (1976) was more studied in situating the individual against the characteristics of herself to which she had become a stranger, or which have been actively given away by her. This highlights the separation or disintegration of human essence that can be recovered through the application of absolute knowledge in reconnecting objectivity and subjectivity. In this way Hegel's points of reference were *Entäusserung* (self-externalization or renunciation) and *Entfremdung* (estrangement). For Hegel the individual formed and was formed of a metaphysical Spirit (or *Geist*) that was created in the realm of objectivity, and which was misshaped through human fallibility (Musto 2010). The *Geist* generates its own momentum as the interrelationship between objectivity and subjectivity unfolds dialectically from the internal contradictions of the totality (Postone 1993).

For Hegel (1963) alienation is false sociability, and its overcoming lies in recovering the form of the universal (or *Geist*) as the subject of the universe, or the matter that defines the universe's subjectivity. In this positivist worldview, human activity underpins movement towards a transhistorical, totalising and absolute idea of liberation by refusing the separation between individuals and *Geist*. In this way an ideal human essence or subjectivity can be defined through material reality, and Marx (1974) identified that Hegel grasped this as a process of objectification rooted in human production of the world. However, Hegel regarded 'alienation as a universal, ontological, characteristic of self-conscious spirit' (Sayers 2003, p. 120), rather than the material outcome of human work in the world. It was only later, through an analysis of capitalism's material objectification that Marx was able to develop an analysis of alienation in relation to processes of dispossession and exploitation.

Yet, specific terminology is important for some scholars in situating the relevance of alienation as a descriptor or heuristic (Cowling 2006; Mészáros 2005; Musto 2010). Cowling (2006) notes that in the early

Marx *Entäussern* and *Entäusserung* are used to mean 'alienation' (Hegel's *renunciation*), through which a thing, product, characteristic of self and so on, has been externalised such that it stands in opposition to oneself. However, Cowling (2006) notes that *Entäussern* is used sparingly in the early Marx, unlike *Veräussern*, which can also be referenced as 'alienate' (in the 1964 translation of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* by Mark Milligan), but not in terms of thing or product standing in opposition to oneself. Cowling (ibid.) argues that *Veräussern* is used to represent *Entäussern* in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1974), in the context of a thing, product or characteristic of self being sold or where an individual is dispossessed. This forces us to ask whether the use of *Veräussern* in the later Marx of the *Grundrisse* and *Capital* maintains an analytical thread through to the use of *Entäussern* in the writings of the young Marx. Here there is a relationship between the activity of ongoing removal or giving away of a specific thing, like the sale of labour-power and its psychological impact. Cowling (2006) argues that it is less likely that Marx switched *Veräussern* for *Entfremden* or *Entfremdung* in his later works, which are translated as to estrange or estrangement. The separation given by the estrangement of a person from an external object, thing or from another person is a protective or adaptive response to a particular situation and which can be overcome or challenged. Here, estrangement from the governance of institutions like universities, or the production of academic commodities, reinforces academic alienation or separation from self, other and the world.

For Cowling (2006) it is clear that there is a break in Marx's engagement with estrangement or alienation as his thinking progressed towards *Capital*, including the *Theories of Surplus Value*. He hypothesises that the concept of alienation is gradually dropped, because the capitalist mode of production is so dehumanising that there is no meaningful essence left from which humans can be alienated. Thus, all that can be analysed are the second-order mediations that dominate and exploit, and give a false appearance to life. This is also a break with the work of: first, Feuerbach who sought to understand our relationship to our species-being in an alienated society, in which essential characteristics of our being had been abstracted from us, and where subjects and predicates stood in opposition to each other (Feuerbach 2008); and second, Hegel's belief that unity

could be achieved through historical development. As a result, alienation becomes an estrangement from a paradise that is lost in the present.

Thus, alienation is psychologically different from estrangement, being grounded in a conscious and qualitative lack of agency or autonomy, where ongoing, systemic exploitation and dispossession are the norm. Moreover, ongoing exploitation and dispossession are reproduced by the individual who has to submit through a lack of power-over her own social reproduction (Holloway 2003). As a result, a range of objects are reified and served as screens onto which a distorted human essence is projected: God; the State; artificial intelligence; and so on (Wendling 2009). This is a crucial mode of discussion that illuminates the work of the young Marx, and which also forces us to situate the term *fremd* in its connection to terms like *Arbeit* (labour). Cowling's (2006) analysis points towards the use of *fremd*, as 'alien', 'foreign', 'strange', 'unrelated', 'belonging to another', to illuminate the social context for productive activity, as a process of dispossession. For others, *fremd* has no implicit connection with estrangement (Hammen 1980, p. 224).

This perceived disconnect between the younger and older Marx, framed by a movement away from the ontological analysis of human essence towards a critique of the political economic contexts in which that essence was forged, has shaped our engagement with alienation. It has been argued that its discursive value ebbed away as the power of the labour movement and its relationship to social democracy framed discussions of whether an increasingly global system of production could only be reformed or improved, or could be overthrown (Musto 2010). As a result, further conceptual analyses emerged, rooted in: the dissonance of production and ruptured social cohesion; the dominating reality of second-order mediations and institutions and the bureaucratic management of performance; the loss of both the products of labour and the self that was attached to those products; and fetishism as the renunciation of the self through the unobtainable nature of the commodities that define capitalist society.

3.1.2 Human Essence: Subject and Object

Marx took Hegel's reified focus on the possibility of recovering a social, human essence, as an ongoing process of becoming, and developed a

materialist form of dialectics that sought to move beyond the appearance of the world (Frolov 1990). This brought him to a negative dialectics that seeks to strip back the layers of fragmentation and dispossession. Within each layer Marx relates the appearance of the world to human essence and the ways in which these are mediated in capitalist society. Here, there is a need to relate abstractions, in the form of the market, money, and so on, to concrete realities like precarious labour, ill-health and the domination of dead over living labour-power. For Marx, the dialectical relationship between essence and appearance, rooted in the relationship between practical activity and theory, enables an individual to validate her experience in producing the world and herself, and the ways in which she is regarded as an object or subject.

Inside capitalism, the separation of object from subject is completed through the dispossession of an individual's ability to acquire means of subsistence, so that she is forced to sell the only commodity she has at her disposal, namely her labour-power. This becomes her only title, and a particular form of historically-situated property. Thus, the daily, necessary alienation of that property, enforced by an infrastructure of non-human mediations like the market, the division of labour and money, ensures that her labour-power is not only objectified in the products of her labour, but also ensures that the same labour-power reinforces her own disconnection from herself and her species (Dyer Witheford 2004). This is the rule of private titles that can be exchanged, of the commodification of services that can be privatised, and the abolition of public goods, each rooted in the alienation of labour-power on an ever-expanding spatial and temporal terrain (Marx 1993).

3.1.3 Overcoming

Capital's desperate attempts to totalise itself in the name of value serve to amplify the reproduction of alienation, and point towards the possibility of its overcoming. Mészáros (2005, p. 21) argues that sublation (*aufhebung*) is central to the understanding of Marx's arguments in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. By framing an analysis of productive activity in terms of negative dialectics or sublation (Hegel 2004), it

becomes possible to reconceive that activity, in terms of the fundamental characteristics of human existence (their ontological determination and essence). Sublation is a process of preserving the essential characteristics of human wealth or richness, inside a critique of the society that distorts or mutilates those characteristics, in order to change the way in which that society is produced. It rests upon the ruthless, negative critique of the world as it is currently and exploitatively constructed, so that another world becomes possible. For Hegel (ibid.), overcoming self-alienation was revealed in the Spirit, whereas for Marx (1974) such overcoming was rooted in the abolition of labour as a form of social mediation rooted in estrangement. Thus, Mészáros (2005) argued that the basis of alienation lies in second-order mediations that impose capitalist work: private property; commodity exchange; and division of labour. Thus, *aufhebung*, is a positive transcendence grounded in human self-mediation. Our indignation at the world as it is, and our struggles for something different, are less an ontological manifestation of labour as a transhistorical thing (Hegel 2004), and rather a historically-specific eruption in response to alienated labour inside capitalist social relations.

In the later Marx (2004, p. 874), *aufhebung* centres on the critique of the capital-relation as a 'process which divorces the worker from the ownership of the conditions of [her] own labour … [in] the social means of subsistence and production'. This divorce is imposed and leaves individuals 'unprotected and rightless' (ibid, p. 876), and looking upon capitalism as governed by 'self-evident natural laws' that enforce domination (ibid., p. 899). This leads to a psychological analysis of alienation framed by powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement, giving rise to an overwhelming sense of hopelessness (Seeman 1959). Here, the colonisation of the soul by capital emerges as a central site of struggle (Brook 2009; Hochschild 1983). In developing a critique of the commodification, commercialisation and privatisation of care and service work, feminist orientations towards humane values that are alienated in the name of exchange-value are central (Andreotti 2016). This challenges depoliticised analyses of concepts like resilience inside organisations, which assume more autonomy and less structural control, and situate deficits inside individuals. As a result, Brook (2009) argues that the circuit of alienation (A-A') has been amplified beyond that imag-

ined by Marx. Thus, it can be argued that labour continually produces and reproduces its own alienation (Lordon 2014), and that it must be fully revealed before it can be overcome (Sayers 1998).

This revelation must be situated in productive activity, and in the abolition of alienated, abstract labour that forms 'self-generated reflexive domination' as an externalised 'socially mediating activity … that exerts a form of impersonal compulsion' (Postone 1993, p. 162). The ongoing process of alienating labour-power, as a self-evident natural law is reinforced by the rupture between labour and property, through which social production reaches its apogee (Marx 1972). For Marx (1974, p. 102) 'private property is the material sensuous expression of estranged human life.' He argues that the domination of movable property can only be overcome in the return of humans to their essence in a social mode of existence that is self-mediated. This does not rely on explaining how capitalism unifies living and dead labour, or variable and fixed capital, or humanity with nature. Rather it emerges from a refusal of the domination of wage labour over life (Marx 1993), and a reconnection with the social quality of human essence (Marx 1974) through the abolition of that labour. For Clarke (1991, p. 62) this means that we try to understand alienation, not in relation to private property as it is derived from objectified labour and the production of things, which appears transhistorical and natural. Rather, private property derives from alienated labour, and has a specific historical and material beginning, emerging from a particular social form of labour, and grounded in specific social relations of production. This enables Marx to move beyond Hegel, by standing against the fetishism of a metaphysical *Geist*, and instead focusing upon a negative critique of labour.

3.2 Categorical Alienation

3.2.1 Dialectics

Marx's scientific method emerges from a desire to uncover the movement of bourgeois society. Marx was not interested in reconciling the fragments of that society into a Hegelian unity. Rather, Marx's dialectical

reasoning pointed towards the work of negative critique of the world as it is, in order to refuse its historical, material appearance. Following Hegel (1963), his focus lay in uncovering possible modes of movement or transition (as *aufhebung* or sublation) to a new, higher stage of development. This was the refusal of the agents of the world to accept their dispossession (Gorz 1982). Throughout this approach, movement is a central concept and is rooted in critique as the ability to think and rethink an object's relation to the world from multiple perspectives. This demands an understanding of the materiality of that object, be it a product, process, knowledge, skill and so on, in the context of its concrete and abstract form. As a result, life's object can be demystified through 'a unity of theory and practice' that stands against 'fetishised forms assumed by social relations' (Bonefeld et al. 1992, p. xv). The centrality of social relations demands that they are seen in motion, with a flow between individuals and the world so that being and becoming can be self-actualised and self-mediated, rather than seen as externally imposed (Hegel 1963).

Movement is fundamental to a form of negative dialectics that strips back the appearance of the world, in order that individuals can situate themselves as beings, and thereby recognise their world as deformed. Recognition is an active practical reflexivity, in which the individual reconstructs herself in an ongoing way in relation to the things she produces, the ways in which she produces them, herself and her society. As a result, an active practical reflexivity asks the individual to understand herself as being objectified through material production. This is a process of understanding how she is constituted as an object and through her objectified activity in the world, as a form of 'determinate abstraction' (Negri 1991). Such forms of *being* that are abstracted or reified, perhaps as human capital, serve to hide or obscure the enclosure of life and the categories that define that enclosure (Marx 2004). A negative uncovering of layers of exploitation demonstrates how productive activity generates alienation, as work becomes labour and forms capital as the concrete, subjective totality that dehumanises life through its enclosure as alienated labour (Holloway 2003). Enclosure is then mediated through private property, such that a bastardised human essence is normalised through an expanding process.

Therefore, negative dialectics points towards *being* as a perpetual process of *becoming* rather than a fixed state, and a process that stands in asymmetrical relationship to concrete totality as the core category that defines capitalist reality (Lukács 1990). Of course, our *being* is distorted because it is constantly being mediated by the division of labour, private property, commodity-exchange and so on. Following Lukács, Mészáros (1972) argues that it is this relationship between the individual and concrete totality, which reveals economic motives, institutional structures, socio-political cultures and so on, that forms the core of Marx's scientific method. This insight helps to uncover the fetishism implicit in immediate interests as they are met inside a commodity producing society. However, this process of uncovering fetishism and relating it to the ways in which *being* is constituted is not focused on categories that have a conceptual, spatial or temporal sequence, such that they could be reformed or unified, for instance through a better capitalism or a more responsive State. Rather, the dialectical relationship between material practice and theory enables a stripping back of the layers that define the appearance of the world, in terms of labour rights and human capital, money, conditions of production, and surplus-value, in order to show how categories emerge from relations that are congealed in these layers, grounded in alienated labour.

3.2.2 The Value of Alienated Labour

In working with the expanding circuit of alienation, we return to a focus upon value and its interrelationship with alienated labour. Here the *Grundrisse* (Marx 1993) enables the humanism of Marx's early writings to be stitched into the critique of the value-form that followed, as it reveals the deep estrangement that occurs between our activity and our humanity in the act of production. In part, Marx (ibid., p. 245) situates this in terms of the dissonance between alleged humane values, like equality and freedom, and the production of exchange-value rooted in exploitative conditions that demand surplus-value. However, this dissonance is reconciled through the reification of capitalist society as an object over which humans have agency, rather than being challenged by a dialectical

inversion that reveals the exploitative, objectified reproduction of that society by human activity (Lukács 1990). The inversion of humanity as object of capital's subjectivity through processes of valorisation means that the appearance of capitalist reality appears as 'a perpetual present' (Postone 1993, p. 349).

In shaping this appearance, value provides the fabric of domination that emerges in juridical, political and social relations. Thus, a fuller understanding of alienation must be rooted in ideas of subjectivity, and of the material relationships between subject and object, as these emerge from the core categories that define life. In the production of capitalist subjectivity, or the totality of capital, these objects are the products of labour, the labour process, ourselves and our identities, and our relationships to society and the material world. This relationship between objects and processes of objectification and subjects is a perpetual moment of confrontation between capital as an extraneous and objective *being*, and labour, which as the source of value is also the source of its own exploitation (Marx 1987). These categories are constantly being reproduced based on the requirements of each for its own existence, with capital being the apparent source of subsistence for labour and labour being the source of use-value for capital. Marx (1993) revealed the categorical structures of domination that enable capital to reproduce its subjectivity through the exploitation of labour-power that must be alienated by the labourer, in order for her to gain access to the means of subsistence. This process of alienating labour, by divorcing the worker's capacity to work from her intention for that capacity, is a use-value for capital and a store of potential energy to be set in motion by fusing it with other objects of use. This productive activity cannot express the needs of the worker, because it shapes the autonomy of capital.

The movement of exploitation is amplified because capital always seeks to set objectified labour, in the form of technology and means of production, against living labour. This is 'the alien quality [*Fremdheit*] of the objective conditions of labour' (ibid., p. 272), grounded in the separation of living labour from its means of obtaining life. Here, Marx (ibid.) refers to the domination of 'alien property' giving legal title to 'the absolute realm' of another's will. This is a will that views labour simply as a form of property belonging to the labourer, the title over which can be

claimed through the imposition of waged or unwaged work. This is a will that also separates labour from the conditions of its realisation because that labour does not own the means of production. As a result, in a categorical analysis of alienation and its possible overcoming, '[t]he only *use value*, therefore, which can form the opposite pole to capital is *labour*' (ibid.). However, this opposite pole is hidden as labour is disciplined by the conditions of production, which appear to be natural and perpetual (ibid., p. 504).

3.2.3 Conditions of Production

Marx (1991, p. 133) is clear that the rate of profit drives the relationship between variable capital or living labour and the total capital advanced. This drives the capitalist's revolutionising of the conditions of production, and global rates of profit then define those conditions across sectors of the economy. In turn, this defines the rate of exploitation of labour, as it is required to work longer or more intensively by setting more means of production to work (ibid., p. 267). The reproduction of exploitation is driven by the reproduction of the capital-labour relation based upon the expansion of value. The reproduction of this relation tends towards the fragmentation of labour through co-operation, so that activities are rationalised and separated out, in order to be delivered more efficiently (Marx and Engels 1998), on an ever-expanding scale (Marx 2004). This generates capital as a systemic totality that subordinates 'all elements of society to itself', or enforces the creation of the characteristics it needs (Marx 1993). This mode of enforcement estranges labour from itself and generates conditions of production as 'an *alien circumstance to the workers*' (Marx 1991, p. 1055). Moreover, these alien circumstances emerge from the labour process itself, including 'natural forces and scientific knowledge', which are separated out and antagonistically presented back to labour as a characteristic of capital (ibid.). As a result, the intensification of work through constant innovation in the conditions of production accelerates 'accumulation by dispossession' forcing the labourer to reassess constantly the capacity and capability of her own labour-power, as 'economic bondage', in order to maintain its market value (Marx 2004, pp. 577–78).

By revolutionising the conditions of production, capital intensifies work across an expanding terrain of competition, which then reduces humans to a utilitarian, dehumanised form of capital (Marx and Engels 2002). As a result, the work of individual producers is proletarianised and they become slaves to desubjectivation (Deleuze and Guattari 1983), a process that is amplified through digital technology and its alienating quantification of work and life (Dyer-Witheford 2015). Quantification enables businesses and individuals to manage the risk that they are not performing in relation to the conditions for the extraction of value in the market. Thus, quantification enables those businesses and individuals to manage the risk to the reproduction of their own rate of profit, and this underpins the obsession with performance data in maintaining competitive advantage.

In terms of HE, quantification through league tables, benchmarking, performance data, excellence outcomes, and so on, enables ranking of individuals and organisations. For instance, the UK government's focus on embedding longitudinal earnings outcomes for programmes of study inside its Teaching Excellence Framework, enables individual educational performance to be mapped to data on earnings and taxation, and aggregated. As a result, employers can hedge their investment on specific individuals who took particular courses at individual institutions, and students and their families can assess the risk of investing their time and money in specific programmes and institutions (Britton et al. 2016; DfE 2017). Thus, quantification tends towards the alienation of individual academics from their peers in their own institutions with whom they are in competition for scarce investment resources, alongside their peers in other institutions with whom they are in competition for student enrolments, and students who are viewed in terms of debt, earnings and satisfaction.

This is exacerbated across universities that demand that academic time is invested in the reproduction of their own and their students' human capital. Thus, there is an intensification of staff development requirements, which include constant curriculum reviews and innovations, alongside an increase in the technical composition of academic labour. By constantly challenging the status and composition of academic labour, capital can reinforce its control of that labour-power through its enforced

alienation. As a result of the need to be always-competitive, academic labour is in a permanent mode of becoming-alienated. In part, this is because across a global terrain, the functions of academic labour have to be commensurable and measurable, based on abstract time. The time it takes to assess and provide feedback on work, to incubate and transfer knowledge, to produce a journal article, or to turnover a particular module or programme, become measures of organisational efficiency. These drive the appearance of value for students and their families, and enable risk-based, performance management to be imposed. Thus, the socially-necessary labour time for the production of academic artefacts enforces competition in the generation of academic knowledge, skill and capability, whether that is generated through investments in human capital or instantiated inside machinery. One outcome of this competitive intersection of time, quantification, performance management and risk is the fetishisation of absolutist discourses about academic labour.

3.2.4 Fetishism

Fetishism became a centrepiece of a re-imagination of estrangement and alienation through the work of Lukács (1990) in re-emphasising the later Marx's (2004) conceptualisations of commodity fetishism and reification, in a society mediated by commodity production. Marx expresses material production, through the application of labour-power, as activity undertaken by humans that is externalised in processes, commodities and other humans or communities, and which confronts that human as an objective power standing over her. This is an externalisation of the self, in the face of an apparently natural and transhistorical phenomena, which has power-over her world (Sayers 2003). For Musto (2010) Lukács' work on fetishism and reification was an extension of Hegelian thought, in its focus on the power of external structures over human productive powers. As a result, some later analyses of alienation focused upon: cognitive dissonance whereby individuals seek an accord in the confrontation between their own productive needs and systems of domination; existential crises erupting from the disunity between individual beliefs about the world and the unity of capitalist production (Heidegger 1978); or, fetishism as the reproduction of a system of domination (Geras 1983).

Further work by Rubin (1972), Kurz (1991), Holloway (1995, 2003), and Jappe (2016), among others, pivots fetishism around the idea that wealth is situated outside of individuals, in commodities that structure the objective order 'arising from the material nature of the things' themselves (Marx 1992, p. 303). For Holloway (2003), fetishism, as an extension of alienation, is the way in which the later Marx explained the process of rupture and the constant drive to expand valorisation. This is conceptually important because commodity fetishism describes either the projection of individual, human characteristics onto specific objects, which gives those objects analytical power in the world, or the introjection of those commodities into the self, as things to be admired. As a result, individual self-identity and self-conception is mediated through the commodity form which penetrates into our sense of self through 'passionate servitude' (Lordon 2014, p. 57), and thereby mediates how we conceive of ourselves and others, alongside what we produce and how.

Holloway (2003) considers the concept of fetishism to be a critique of *both* bourgeois society *and* hegemonic social and economic theory, in describing the asymmetry between the stability of bourgeois society and the dehumanisation of people. A critical element of this asymmetry is the alienation of our individual and collective capabilities, which are coerced away by capital through abstract labour (Kurz 1991). Fetishism then provides the motive energy for the movement of a totalising system around abstractions like money, which represent the wealth of social production. An engagement with fetishism develops explanatory power in relation to the theory of value (Rubin 1972) because the projection of human characteristics onto commodities defines how relations of production are materialised in concrete form. Private property is central to this process, because possession has become the way in which humans conceptualise life. Moreover, the ability to possess the means of life depends upon exchange, and this is rooted in the alienation of labour and the creation of capital. As a result, Marx (1974) argues that the basis of capitalist wealth in commodity production is rooted in the absolute alienation of humanity, driven by money as the gatekeeper for access to the store of social wealth and to meaningful social activity, and predicated upon its own reproduction.

Thus, Marx (ibid.) is clear that private property, which emerges from productive, social activity, emerges from ongoing acts of objectification that are how humans manifest themselves. The act of possessing and desiring commodities demands productive activity on an expanding scale that ruptures barriers and destroys bonds that are limits to acquisition. Clarke (1991, p. 49) reiterates how alienated, social activity, rooted in specific relations of exchange, underpins private property. Marx refuses to focus upon the movement of private property in the constitution of liberal subjectivity, and instead seeks its genesis in the production and accumulation of value, through the generation of surplus-value, grounded in alienated labour. Thus, the coercion or control of surplus-value production has to be mediated through the division of labour, which Marx (1974, p. 113) describes as 'the economic expression of the *social character of labour* within the estrangement'. It is the relationship between these mediations and productive activity that lies at the heart of alienation in capitalist society. The movements of the division of labour, private property, commodity exchange and money pivot around the production of value and the control of labour-power as a commodity. As Clarke (1991, p. 59) notes, this emerges from 'how commodities acquire social powers as the alienated power of social labour'.

3.3 The Material Production of Alienation

3.3.1 Form-Making Activity as Alienated Labour

The site of alienation is human activity in nature. This is an uncovering of Hegel and Feuerbach's focus upon alienation or estrangement in the context of philosophy, religion, law, politics and the state, so that their genesis in material production can be analysed. A critical, negative starting point for a critique of material production is to uncover the alienated genesis of academic labour as form-making activity (Kitarō 2012), which Hegel could only identify in terms of '*abstractly mental* labour' that could recover a pure human essence (Marx 1974, p. 131). This then enables a focus on its overcoming as an emancipatory social practice that prefigures

a reimagining of the relationship between humans and nature. In reaching below the surface effects of the reengineering of HE through competition and value production, we need to address how this appears *both* as a process of dispossession of time, agency and autonomy for academics and students, *and* as the appropriation of concrete labour from the standpoint of capital (Marx 1993, p. 831). A pivot for this analysis is a focus on subjectivity.

The social relationships that define capitalist reality are constructed through historically-specific relations of production, which are themselves rooted in the dispossession and appropriation of everyday, practical and sensuous activity, as that activity is repurposed as private property (Marx 1974; Marx and Engels 1998). As Clarke (1991) argues, at the root of Marx's critique of capital was the analysis of how both human subjectivity and activity as they inform each other are alienated under capitalism, and how as a result human life is devalued 'in direct relation with the *increasing value* of the world of things' (Marx 1974, p. 63). Here, the apparent starting point is commodity production as a process of exploitation and proletarianisation. Moreover, flowing from the sale of labour-power as a commodity, and underpinning alienated labour, is the objectification of labour as it is embodied in the one-sided production of physical things, which then come to dominate life. Thus, the process of objectification is 'a *vitiation* of the worker, objectification is a *loss* and a *servitude to the object*, and appropriation is *alienation* '(ibid., p. 83).

The labourer's activity is alienated from her precisely because it cannot satisfy her intrinsic needs, because she has no access to means of subsistence. Her own labour-power is her sole property-right, giving access to a living, which must therefore be sold and resold. This also requires increasing amounts of cognitive dissonance in order *both* to re-enter the market to resell her labour-power, *and* to believe that she loves what she does. This takes the form of further self-alienation, and is a process that is enforced in a commodity producing society because the objects of that society are forced to enter into relation with each other. This includes the commodification of subjectivity through an expansion in the realm of intrinsic needs (Lazzarato 2014). Owners of commodities are also placed in relation to each other such that the title to those commodities can be exchanged or alienated. A critical step in this process is that those owners

'recognise each other as owners of private property' (Marx 2004, p. 178), namely the means of subsistence and production amongst capitalists, and labour-power amongst workers. For Marx (1974, p. 72) '*[p]rivate property* is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequence, of *alienated labour*', and it is private property's movement that makes visible alienation. This means that both capitalists and labourers recognise labour-power as an object or a commodity that can be externalised or made alienable. In this way, wage-labour cements 'a relation between owners of commodities in which they appropriate the produce of the labour of others by alienating [*entfremden*] the produce of their own labour' (Marx 2004, p. 203). When the worker sells her labour-power, she hands its title plus her capacities and time to the employer (Marx 1993), and enters into an asymmetrical relation of co-dependence with the employer. Clarke (1991, p. 52) argues that second-order mediations like private property then presuppose 'the social relation of alienated labour', and these mediations create a structure that ensures the domination of capital through the imposition of work.

3.3.2 Labour Power as Alien Property

Marx (2004, p. 270) is clear that valorisation rests on the objectification of labour through the process of fusing the use-value of labour-power with means of production, which otherwise remain perpetually divorced (ibid., p. 723). Living labour is the source of value, and emerges from an individual's capacity for labour in her cognitive, emotional and physical capabilities. Whilst the arguments for entrepreneurialism, employability and the development of human capital inside HE are situated superficially in the development of the individual and her capabilities, as wants that emerge from inside her, they are a function of the desire to expand value production. Marx (1974) argues that exchange is an abstract, inhuman relation, predicated upon value materialised as money. As a result, active academic production, like any other labour process, demands the constant objectification of the academic as a transformation 'from the form of unrest [*Unruhe*] into that of being [*Sein*], in the form of motion [*Bewegung*] into that of objectivity [*Gegenständlichkeit*] (Marx 2004,

p. 296). Thus, living labour contains the seed of value, assuming that its potential labour-power can be released through objectification.

Labour-power is released as a form of alien property which creates value and that can be separated from labour because it is the private property of the capitalist (Marx 1993). Labour-power as alien property and source of value underpins the incessant reproduction of the capital-relation (Marx 2004, p. 724), and this forces the academic to sell her labour-power over-and-over again to gain means of life, and to be constantly enriching that labour-power so that it remains desirable to the purchaser (Marx 1993). This is amplified by the ongoing disciplining of that academic labour-power through performance management and metric-based monitoring (Ball 2015). The basis of enforced competition between businesses and individuals is alienated labour, and through it the separation of the individual from her wider communities is realised, through the objectification of the individual and of her society, which becomes an abstraction governed by external mediations like money. This mode of social production dehumanises the individual in her relationship to her society.

Such dehumanisation infects academic life because its focus on status underpins liberal society's preoccupation with private property (including intellectual property and intellectual/social capital). However, the critique of academic labour-power offers an opportunity to ground the material and historical alienation of academic work. This opens-up possibilities for challenging the neoliberal obsession with competition, performance management, data-driven risk management, and the generation of abstract human capital. Instead it enables us to challenge the relations of production that enforce specific divisions of academic labour, and to generate alternatives. As Clarke argues (1991, p. 55), '[i]f alienated labour is the basis of property, the abolition of property can only take the form of the abolition of alienated labour', and this is the genesis of human emancipation across the social terrain (Marx 1974).

3.3.3 Mediations and the Imposition of Work

Alienation is amplified because commodity exchange, and in particular the exchange of labour-power, is mediated by money, and as a result work

can be externally imposed as a moral imperative that emerges imminent to the market as a disciplinary mechanism (Hayek 1988). Money is 'value endowed with its own might and will', which forms 'alien wealth' through the self-objectification of the labourer (Marx 1993, p. 453). This is reproduced across a social terrain through the internalisation of competition, whereby capital 'draws new vital spirits into itself, and realises itself anew' (ibid.). In part, this explains the increasing focus across HE on data and metrics, as a way through which academic labour can be decoded for a financial market and brought into relation with other forms of labour, in particular through the relation between education outcomes and earnings data (OfS 2018; McGettigan 2015). The ability to test research, teaching quality, learning environment, and student outcomes across individual subjects and institutions, and then to compare them across national and international educational terrains, becomes a way in which the functions of universities can become locked into the capitalist vortex (Dyer-Witheford 2015).

What is hidden or revealed in this vortex, depending on the level of analysis of financialisation, is the idea/purpose and content of the university as it is structured through academic labour. This questions how universities as mediating institutions become 'form-constitutive' in enabling 'real contradictions to be reconciled' inside capitalism (Bonefeld 2004, p. 114), and give social form to those antagonistic relations. However, they are also reproduced through second-order mediations like *private property – commodity exchange – division of labour*, which infect the University just as they do any other firm. Although second-order mediations shape processes of financialisation and marketisation, they are driven by an analysis of the commodification of education, with alienated labour as its point of origin. As a result, they shape the social powers of labour through proletarianisation as the alienated, economic expression of those powers. This occurs precisely because in a commodity producing society, things dominate people and dead labour imposes itself over the living.

In addressing their alienation, academics enter into internal and external conflicts. On the one hand, they see their work as progressive in contributing to student satisfaction or perceptions of student freedom or autonomy as economic actors possessing new forms of human capital.

Here, they also see their own work in terms of its wider societal use, and this is predicated upon abstract ideals of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, which simply form the tools of further self-alienation. As Marx notes (1974) capital is indifferent to the content of labour beyond its ability to generate abstract value. On the other hand, such work is increasingly disciplined for exchange-value, and the surplus time given to the production of academic commodities amplifies overwork. The cognitive dissonance between, first, the perceptions of academics that their work has use-value, and, second, the reality that it is subsumed under exchange-value, is increasingly revealed as world-weariness or *Weltschmerz*. The academic invests her subjectivity in the production of academic knowledge, and yet her relationship to that knowledge is increasingly one-sided in that it simply provides a living. Moreover, the ways in which her labour-power are governed is increasingly coercive, and performance management debilitates rather than revitalises her creative power.

3.4 The Alienation of Academic Life

The institutional mediations of the University force the academic to becomes complicit in protecting her labour-power, and seeking to enhance its value in the market. This lack of subjective power catalyses further fragmentation between individuals, including intersectional injustices as subgroups are dominated and othered (Gabriel and Tate 2017). For Marx (1974) this was critical in defining the subjugation of society to the accumulation of outputs from the aggregation of individual lives that are themselves stunted, because their species-being becomes alien beyond a means for individual existence. The academic's agency lies solely in the management of her own human capital balance sheet, and for educators this disassembles practice through ideological narratives of entrepreneurship, excellence and impact.

The point of such disassembling is twofold: first, to commodify those components and to turn them into forms of private property that can be valorised; second, to coerce individuals into becoming competing and valuable components in the assemblage of capital (Lazzarato 2014). This points beyond the treatment of alienation as an individual problem, and

situates it against social relations and our collective capacity to change rather than adapt to the existing order (Kitarō 2012). In this way, social practices focus upon the value of work, including the value of work on the self and the value of an individual's desire to work on herself. This is the submission of individuals to general and abstract social labour. Universities are central nodes in the production of these social practices and in the imposition of work on the self, in the ways in which curricula are developed for employment and in the ways in which performance management is normalised. This simply increases the helplessness of the individual in the face of social production, and alienates her from her society (Marx 1974, 1993).

The clock amplifies helplessness, precisely because the production of social life is governed by abstract labour time (Postone 1993). In terms of academic labour this imposes the speed-up of commodity production and circulation, *both* in the classroom through shortened or more intensive courses, *and* in the transfer of knowledge into society potentially managed through knowledge excellence frameworks. The need to drive efficiencies in academic time is also governed by student debt. For Meyerhoff et al. (2011), student debt stitches the subjectivity of the student into a lifetime of alienated labour, through which her future is enclosed by the imperative of work. One implication of this is a competitive pressure on education institutions to connect the efficient use of time to human capital enrichment, and a recalibration of effective teaching through student satisfaction metrics. As a result, this gives less time for activities that are unrelated to employability and entrepreneurship (Cleaver 2017, p. 92), and instead imposes capital's time-imperative as a fetishised reality, through which meaning emerges as productivity, intensity, excellence, impact and surplus (Mészáros 2008). This materially degrades academic existence because all activity is dominated by the performance management of abstract, quantified time.

3.5 Becoming

Sayers (1998, p. 89) argues that Marx, like Hegel, regarded alienation as a stage in the process of human self-realisation pointing towards communism (Wendling 2009). Marx (1991, p. 264) was clear that the chal-

lenge is to develop a democratic socialisation of production rooted in communal conditions, emerging from the concrete lived experience of capitalism. However, such conditions had to develop from a self-actualised, independent subjectivity that stood in opposition to its present alienation, and recognised its material basis in alienated labour (Mészáros 1972). Here, education is pivotal because the possibility of *becoming* lies in the individual's recognition of her stunted subjectivity, and the fetishised objects of her consciousness, in order to develop a new self-consciousness. This is the reappropriation of the objective essence of her humanity or self-consciousness, not as alien labour, but as her human richness (Holloway 2016).

Marx (1970) is clear that this requires work to reveal the negation of the essence of humanity, which is always in a mode of being denied or self-estranged. This renders our being as externally imposed and objectivised through its relationship to capital. The work of practical humanism points towards the appropriation of our objective essence by overcoming self-estrangement, as a negation *both* of second-order mediations *and* the alienated labour that bears them. This contains the potential for a positive, more humanist outcome (Dunayevskaya 1983), rooted in the abolition of alienated labour and the development of consciousness for-itself (Hegel 1963). This aligns with Holloway's (2003) focus upon developing a negative subjectivity, as the movement against the denial of human subjectivity, and this includes a movement against the enclosure of life. As a result of this, relations of dignity can be developed through a movement against identity, which celebrates the movement and differences of individuals, rather than the homogenised identities that capital requires for its valorisation (Musto 2010).

By refusing to focus upon individual deficits in relating to objective social norms, it is possible to situate alternatives against the systemic deformation of our *being*, and to work towards self-mediation and self-consciousness through a critique of bourgeois society and the dehumanisation of capitalist reproduction. For Holloway (2003) this is made concrete where the failings of capitalism to reproduce itself, for instance in the role of precarious employment or debt-fuelled study, form ruptures that enable conscious resistance to commodity fetishism and exploitative social relations. Here, our understanding and feeling of alienation enables

us to imagine that another world is possible, as an open process of transformation. In a system of capital, alienation moves against its own negation in the process of valorisation, and therefore the movement against alienation is the movement against value.

This echoes Postone (2009, p. 42) in arguing that the 'contradictions of capital point to the abolition, not the realization of the Subject', through changes in material practice that recover the idea of human essence. In Marx's (1974) terms this pivots around an analysis of: the products of labour (knowledge); the labour process (profession); the production of the self (*weltschmerz*); and our relationship to our society or our species-being (identity). Through a critique of these components of alienation it becomes possible to point towards a society in which alienation can finally be overcome and in which human beings can at last be at home in world (Sayers 2003, p. 126).

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Part II

The Terrain of Academic Alienation

4

Knowledge

4.1 Knowledge in Society

In academic practice, the creation of knowledge, or the ability to work with others to understand the world, is presented as a labour of love. Knowledge is the raison d'être of academic labour and shapes the identity of the academic in ways that intersect affect, belonging, cognition and disciplinary engagement. Yet, academic practice increasingly demonstrates the interrelationship between the concrete and the abstract as it is made productive of value, and thereby enforces a disconnection between the perceived public good of knowledge, and its exchange-value in the market. The separation of the material production of life from our modes of understanding it reduces *both* our understanding of the world *and* our ability to reshape it. Marx (1974) argued that where specific, natural disciplines or sciences are reduced by the law of value to an abstract materiality, and where they are shaped by productive activities mediated by the division of labour, then our understanding of those disciplines and of the world form an 'alienated universality' underpinned by a 'radical divorce of theory and practice' (Mészáros 2005, p. 103). For Frolov (1990) this is realised as a cleavage between the natural-biological and the social unity of essence and existence. Thus, there is a rupture between the knowledge

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of self required by the individual to survive the domination of capital, and the knowledge of the world that she requires in order to be reproduced. This is a rupture between social reproduction and 'the absolute movement of becoming', represented by the richness of human nature as an end in itself (Marx 1993, p. 488).

One result is that in claiming ownership of nature, labour and scientific production, capital can claim socialised knowledge as its own, in order to maintain its social metabolic control. In part, it does this through the separation of subject-specific knowledge, the fragmented nature of which implies that control can be imposed from outside (Mészáros 2005). Moreover, the imposition of control pushes the imposition of hegemonic norms, which marginalise or deny forms of knowledge that cannot be valorised. This means that the knowledge that defines the world is predicated upon the reproduction of capital as a totality, and the reproduction of structures that enable value-creation. This then marginalises aboriginal, decolonial, anti-oppressive knowledge, and understandings from perspectives that are feminist, disabled, queer and so on, unless these contribute to the circuit of value (Christensen 2018; Styhre 2018). For those academics operating within and through these perspectives, whilst there may be value through research excellence in such knowledge, it remains unable to redefine the governance and regulation of the institutions inside which it is generated.

The power-to explain the world, revealed through knowledge emanating from communities have that have been made marginal, as an alternative response to crisis, consistently runs up against narratives of power-over the world that are structured through private property, commodity exchange and the division of labour. The structuring realities repeatedly 'other' those knowledges by enclosing them inside data, metrics and the market, in response to imposed discourses of efficiency, excellence, impact, intensity, productivity and satisfaction. As a result, academic knowledge remains grounded in hegemonic power relations, and has a limited or partial explanatory power. Hence, more work is required to integrate the alienating contexts of othered knowledges and epistemologies, such that they enable a negative critique of hegemonic knowledge and a positive critique of the possibilities for recasting the world. Such a critique opens-up possibilities for understanding how participative,

collective, solidarity narratives challenge established positions by framing the contours of the world from its margins (by those excluded). This includes a focus upon humanist perspectives, commensurate with broader ecological ways of knowing the world that: challenge the centring of established canons; push back against the separation of subjects to think about integrated activities; refocus education beyond the classroom to think of intellectual work in society; rethink the individualised, positional obsession with status through certification and summative assessment, in opposition to collective, participative work; and refuses metrics that normalise based upon certain atomised ideals of performance, rather than celebrating dignity and difference.

4.1.1 Knowledge and Truth

Hegel (1963, §5) noted that truth emerges from forms of universality that 'help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science', in order to move the '*love* of knowing' beyond disciplinary boundaries to become '*actual* knowing'. Marx (1974, p. 98) stated that a more complete understanding could only emerge from the integration of natural science and the science of humans, so that 'there will be one science'. This is a methodological claim for holistic questioning of the world, rather than a call for hegemonic forms of knowledge. For Marx (2004), this integration is refused because the system of material production of the world ensures that knowledge is seen as an object, or a collection of objects, *both* external to individuals *and* only knowable by society in their commodified form. In this way, forms of knowledge become alienable, because they are manufactured by alienated-labour in spaces that are shaped by private property.

As a product of labour, knowledge may enable the academic to decode her work, and to explain specific, labour-related problems. However, it primarily enables her to reproduce her own labour-power by enabling means of subsistence, and to return to work each day for a wage, inside a specific set of disciplinary, working routines. In this way, her production of new knowledge remains alien property, and therefore human subjectivity is estranged from its essence, because it is objectified through

specific, culturally-imposed norms. The practical activity of knowledge-production, and our relationship to that knowledge as a fetishised object, situates our becoming as defined in opposition to those objects, through a process of dehumanisation that converts human creativity into objects for others (Holloway 2003). Such dehumanisation and denial of specific experiences of the world, framed through knowledge, scholarship, curriculum content, curriculum learning outcomes and assessment practices, catalyse global calls to decolonise, feminise, disable or queer the curriculum (Ciccariello-Maher 2017; Dismantling the Master's House (DTMH) 2015; Motta 2017; Olufemi 2017; Rhodes Must Fall 2018). These movements are underscored by different perspectives and do not have their own internal coherence, with waves of radicalisation, difference and development echoing through them. Moreover, they do not have a common set of objectives. However, they do share a common critique of capital and its structuring ontology and epistemology.

The dehumanisation of knowledge means that from *both* the perspective of labour *and* of human need socialised knowledge appears fragmented and distorted. It is only from the perspective of capital that it appears able to define an autonomous existence, rooted in the production of value as the moment of truth, with a tendency to be shaped by norms that are white, male, straight and able. This brings knowledge as a good produced socially into tension with a society that is mediated by private interests that are constantly seeking to rationalise knowledge production and to make it more efficient. Here, the relationship between private ownership of the means of production, the competitive urge that drives 'the transformation of manual and intellectual labour, including scientifically creative labour', and the needs of alienated labour for a living, enable capital to utilise the individual and co-operative skills, capabilities and knowledge for value production (Mandel 1991, p. 77). Thus, abstract social labour, conditioned by the division of labour, appears fragmented and independent, and more readily exploitable. As real subsumption is imposed and capitalist development appears natural rather than historical, capital points to a version of social time that imposes social metabolic control through 'the accumulation of knowledge and experience of humanity' (Postone 1993, p. 296, in which 'alienated interaction between the past and present … can be overcome' (ibid., p. 301).

4.1.2 Knowledge and Commodification

The conditions in which knowledge workers labour are a form of self-imprisonment, and that incarceration is a function of how the commodity structures wealth (Marx 2004, p. 125). The production of knowledge is an ongoing form of estrangement, which generates a reciprocal dependence between the knowledge worker and the owner of her labour, or where she is self-employed between herself and those with whom she must exchange that knowledge for a wage. Folded-in on top of this is the competition that she must suffer with others working in the same field. Thus, the drive to produce in order to realise exchange-value becomes 'the all-sided mediation' (Marx 1993, p. 156). As knowledge production expands across a global terrain, it increasingly presents itself back as an apparently objective world predicated upon an ever-expanding objectification of labour. Thus, knowledge as commodity is internalised as alien property, embodying abstract processes and rooted in the loss of time for concrete activities other than as they are expressed in comparable, generalised units. The production of knowledge appears to have specific, useful content, and yet in marketised conditions of production, it can only express abstract human labour (Marx 2004).

The production of knowledge as an abstract human activity runs up against barriers to that reproduction in the lived reality of the world. Increasingly, we see that in spite of our progress in understanding and organising the world, humanity is increasingly unable to alleviate crises of finance, poverty, climate and environment. Our existing modes of managing society, both in political and civil spaces, are increasingly unable to utilise knowledge for any means beyond value production. This demands an expanding circuit of cognitive dissonance, rooted in the idea that what is required is less a re-imagination of social reproduction, and more a hope that better knowledge will enable the system to be reformed. As Noble (1999, p. 184) argues this is preferable to an acknowledgement 'that there is an obligation on the part of the creators of this stockpile of knowledge to work out *how to disarm its ability to destroy us*.' Instead, we focus upon technological or cybernetic solutions to the perceived, human imperfections of the system, or we seek to overcome those imperfections by enriching human capital.

The urgency for academics to consider their knowledge in society, has led some to highlight the deep interrelationships between academic knowledge, the military or the militarisation of society, artificial intelligence and commercial computing, for instance in the development of cybernetics as a system of control or in the development of drones and other military hardware (Hoofd 2010; Winn 2013). Others have pushed back against commodification, where it is underpinned by the proletarianisation of academic labour, realised as overwork, insecurity, ill-health and exploitation (Hall and Bowles 2016). For Dyer-Witheford (2015, p. 104) 'educational commodities are paradigmatic for a new global level of real subsumption and proletarianisation.' Elsewhere, we witness academic-activism against socio-environmental degradation, including their impact on indigenous populations.

However, these moments of protest are placed in asymmetrical relationship to the transnational associations of capitals whose valorisation is predicated upon the production of educational commodities. This means that, for most academics, activity rests upon the creation of new knowledge that can be exchanged, for instance: through spillover or spin-out activities that can be commercialised; through the commodification of disciplinary knowledge, as digital, learning objects, innovation projects, or scholarly outputs; and, in the creation of new curriculum and student support services, for instance in the use of learning analytics to manage student engagement. These commodities also rest upon historic knowledge that can be recoded or instantiated inside digital technology, for instance through the mandated recording of lectures and seminars. It is important to recognise that academic knowledge is also embedded in social contexts through specific technologies and modes of organisation. In this way, academic labour is complicit in the wider proletarianisation of global, social life, especially where technological research and development catalyses efficiencies in production and a reduced circulation time for specific commodities. This promise of increased rates of relative surplus value extraction fuels the employability agendas of government educational departments for whom the skills developed at University are framed increasingly by the needs of the labour market, which itself forms a central mechanism for regulating academic labour.

Commodification, therefore, extends the terrain of alienation, both through the internalised mechanics of competition and the reduction of cognition to value. This furthers the extension of fetishism into the social fabric, through knowledge transfer, commercialisation and entrepreneurship in value-creation, such as research programmes focused on connecting capability especially around technology transfer (Research England 2018). As a result, the intellectual property surrounding the production, circulation and accumulation of knowledge forms a terrain in which knowledge is reified because value comes to regulate the academic's relationship to society (Rubin 1972). As a result, any freedom that exists is simply the capacity to exchange or sell that knowledge as a product. One outcome of this is that knowledge and the knowledge economy underpins a specific form of economic freedom, which is the freedom of things (Marx 2004), and this is used to justify competition and marketisation, which then structure discourses of excellence and impact. For Marx (1974, p. 64) these mediations follow from the statement 'that the worker is related to the *product of [her] labour* as to an *alien* object.'

This estrangement is amplified because academic work is resold as a labour of love, with the result that individual emotions and affects, cultural cues and mores, and the construction of the relations between individuals 'are themselves the very material of our everyday exploitation' (Žižek 2009, p. 139). Thus, the work of mentoring, personal tutoring, group supervision and so on, becomes fetishised as capital finds techniques that enable it to enclose and commodify an increasingly fluid and identity-driven set of social relations, which can form the basis of further exchange. Moreover, in the creation of services designed around student support and the management of the institution's relationship with its students and staff, capital commodifies and extracts value from everyday experiences and relationships, in order to reduce unproductive time. However, the institutional management of these relationships imposes norms, in terms of expectations, outcomes, monitoring procedures and time available. This imposition of performance management tends to objectify academic relationships, which can be quantified and serve as the basis of further exchange. Here, the bounding of the relationship between student and academic by wage-labour and debt reinforces alienation, as the University and its partners seek to extract surplus value

through this process (Martin 2011). Moreover, this also tends to marginalised behaviours regarded as abnormal or different, where those cannot be captured by the umbrella of diversity (Ahmed 2017). The nature of exchange, and the attempt to extract surplus value from a co-opted academic process, means that hierarchical power relations developed inside universities are re-produced as the relation between those things that can actually be exchanged, and experiences that fall outside this relation are silenced.

4.1.3 Knowledge as Competition

Competition between individual academics and between universities as associations of capitals (Hall 2014) forms a way of socially-structuring the allocation of relevant, academic labour (Marx 2004). As value emerges from (or is attached to) specific individuals, disciplines or institutions and the knowledge they produce, resources flow to them. The treadmill logic of competition enforces constant innovation across a whole socio-technical system like HE, in order that individuals or institutions can maintain or increase the rate of extraction of relative surplus value (i.e. to accumulate more resources, surplus or profit), and to remove barriers to consumption (i.e. to attract more students, to employ high performing academics, or to transfer more knowledge). This has ramifications for academic labour as Newfield (2010) highlights, with an increasing proletarianisation of scholarly work under three types of labour. The first type relates to *commodity skills*, which are readily obtained and whose possessors are interchangeable, for instance, back office or helpdesk staff. The second type incorporates those with *leveraged skills*, which require advanced education and which offer clear added-value to the University, and yet which are more generally possessed globally, for instance, the teachers of technical skills or graduates employed on limited contracts for curriculum delivery or assessment. The third type includes those with *proprietary skills*, defined as 'the company-specific talents around which an organization builds a business' (ibid., p. 13). University management cultivate and commodify only those with the skills to enhance proprietary knowledge, from which rents or profits can be extracted.

Through academic competition, commodity and leverage labour can be proletarianised or outsourced because of the low levels of socially-necessary labour time embedded in the value of their work. The alternative for academics with commodity or leveraged skills is an increasingly proletarianised existence in teaching or research, through which they are forced to compete with a growing, global, surplus and precarious army of cheapened, academic labour. Such competition emerges from: massive open on-line courses; a range of private providers driving down costs; the removal of student number controls enabling an open market; and the modular recreation of the curriculum, such that its design, delivery and assessment components can be digitised or delivered at low cost (McMillan Cottom 2016; Rizvi et al. 2013). However, competition ensures that proprietary work also becomes increasingly precarious (Pusey and Sealey-Huggins 2013). As a commodity, technology or innovation becomes diffused across the society of HE, the socially-necessary character of the labour-power expended in producing it is diminished over-time and this reduces its value in the market. This underpins the drive for constant entrepreneurial activity by the academic, and the constant maintenance of status through knowledge-production that demonstrates excellence or impact, as a form of fetish.

4.2 The General Intellect

Inside the University the process of fetishisation increasingly mediates social relations through coercive and exploitative regimes of technological control (Foucault 1975), which strengthen the idea that capitalist relations are natural and purely technical. However, this naturalisation process reveals the reproduction of the *general intellect*, or knowledge as society's main productive force (Dyer-Witheford 1999; Marx 1993; Virno 1996). This force emerges in the connections between socialised labour-power and *both* science *and* technology. Marx (1993, p. 694) argued that the dynamics of capitalism meant that capital soaks up or takes in the knowledge, skills and capabilities 'of the general productive forces of the social brain', even though these have emerged from labour. By instantiating these inside technology or fixed capital, these social productive forces appear to be 'an attribute of capital' (ibid.).

As the technical and skilled work of the socialised worker, operating co-operatively in universities, factories or corporations, is subsumed inside machinery, the general intellect of society is absorbed into capitalised technologies and techniques. As a result, 'in machinery, knowledge appears as alien, external … and living labour subsumed under self-activating objectified labour' (ibid., p.695). As a result, the craft and technical skills, capabilities, and knowledge of the social individual are continually absorbed into the things she produces, where those capacities enable capital to be reproduced as value-in-motion. Where they do not enable value through the reduction of labour costs for an increase in productivity, they are denied.

Capital takes the 'productiveness of labour … as its foundation and starting point', as a gift (Marx 2004, p. 512), and one which is enhanced through state-sponsored investment in education, industrial strategies and scientific infrastructure (Winn 2013). This dominant view of value-driven, societal intelligence, corrupts the ability to think critically about the human experience and to solve problems at the level of society. Inside capitalist totality, this inability is secondary to capital's constant grappling with the contradiction between: first, its development of the co-operative powers of labour to valorise increasing means of production through the 'conscious application of science' (Marx 2004, p. 364); and second, its desire to annihilate its dependence on labour-power as the source of valorisation, or to fuse weak human beings with machinery (Marx 1974). Instead the focus is on marketised or outsourced solutions to problems, and to separate out disciplinary strands of social knowledge so that they form 'the necessary historical condition' for commodification (Vercellone 2007, p. 27). As a result, the natural sciences are divorced from philosophy and human, social development is deformed.

For this argument, a focus upon the general intellect enables us to analyse academic labour against the contours of capitalist reproduction, including in its social relations, cultures, modes of production and technologies. These relations, cultures, modes and techniques are always being finessed systematically, in order to drive value production and new spaces for value creation. Historically and materially these have flowed from those who have power-over the world, with structures that tend to centre white, straight, able and masculine characteristics. As these charac-

teristics become normalised as the transhistorical source of value, all other characteristics are forced into competition with them and are measured against them. It is only under extreme duress, such as that experienced in the secular crisis of capital, that these norms are questioned, precisely because the system they have come to represent appears unable to support social or environmental reproduction. It is important, therefore, to analyse the ways in which capital continues to colonise knowledge production, and the voices represented in this process, in order to question the usefulness of intellectual work and academic knowledge.

Such questioning highlights how socially-useful academic knowledge is transformed through the law of value and its incorporation as the general intellect, in order: to reduce academic labour-time as a cost factor and to appropriate intellectual work; to further the academic division of labour; to generate new capital from forms of cognition; and, to deliver technological innovation, such that 'the [academic] comes to relate more as a watchman and regulator to the production process itself' (Marx 1993, p. 705). This aims at the 'transformation of the intellectual quality of living labour' (Vercellone 2007, p. 29), or to collapse living labour into fixed capital that 'empties [her] labour of all content' (Marx 2004, p. 548). Thus, the material, social wealth that forms one potential outcome of academic work is re-cast as academic labour moves from being objectified to being alienated. As a result 'scientific knowledge is increasingly materialized in production' (Postone 1993, p. 297). Here, technology is pivotal in defining how 'general social knowledge has become a *direct force of production*', and how the general intellect has subsumed 'the real life process' (Marx 1993, p. 706). The real life process can only serve value, and cannot enable material wealth in the form of human richness. The general intellect as an oppressive, hegemonic form of knowledge production and co-option is therefore a suffocating enabler of a crisis of social reproduction.

Given the role of academic labour in the reproduction of the general intellect, it is important to question how those co-operative skills, capacities and knowledge might be made freely available, in order to widen the realm of freedom as opposed to that of necessity (Gorz 1982; Marx 1991). At issue is the possibility for liberating the general intellect as a form of mass intellectuality that reclaims subjectivity and disparate

human richness, in the name of a communal existence, rather than for capitalist enclosure, the objectification of labour inside machinery, and the private accumulation of value via regimes of intellectual property and rents (Virno 2004).

Across the social terrain, informal and formal education shapes critical spaces for new forms of mass intellectuality, including: in commons that enable globalised dissemination of knowledge at the edges of capitalist work, for example through open education or critical pedagogy (Open Library of Humanities n.d.); and inside the community-building of alternative educational settings like student occupations, co-operative centres or social science centres (Amsler and Neary 2012; Lazarus 2017). These alternatives are potentially transformatory where they work against capital's dynamics for accumulation, reproduction and profitability. Thus, co-opting science and technology by liberating the general intellect is crucial in offering a crack through which labour might be rehabilitated by the working class *for* itself (Holloway 2010), in order to transcend itself through self-abolition as self-mediation. It is in the connection between educational contexts and society where producers can critique the purposes for which the general intellect is commodified rather than socialised, in order to become the actual foundation of subversion-through-praxis.

However, it is important to analyse the mechanisms through which capital seeks to overcome these struggles and the barriers they impose on accumulation. Inside education, such mechanisms include: performance management through learning analytics and data-mining; extending the jurisdiction and governance of cloud-based technologies in the management of networks; enforcing private property rights through intellectual property and patent law so that a knowledge-rent economy can take hold; and processes of personalisation. As Beradi (2009, p. 90) argues, cybernetic technology is key to capital's command of the labour of knowledge-workers who must be always available to perform inside global production cycles. This is an echo of Marx's (1993, p. 532) analysis of technology increasing individual alienation rather than reducing toil, because it 'becomes the most unfailing means for turning the whole lifetime of the worker and his family into labour-time at capital's disposal for its own valorisation'.

4.3 The Functions of Academic Knowledge

4.3.1 Questioning the Social Function of Academic Knowledge

For Mészáros (2005, p. 103), the disciplinary divorce of knowledge enables 'the institutionalised alienation of means from ends' and 'a radical separation from all other modes of activity'. In part, this is driven by a need to maintain status and the appearance that theoretical subjects, divorced from their application at the level of society, represent a true form of worthwhile 'species-activity'. Here then, there is a critical response to the purpose and function of academic knowledge, through an overt focus upon a division of labour that is rooted in the commodity-exchange of specific packets of academic knowledge, which in turn have their own underlying, apparently inviolate material base (Lukács 1990). One issue with this is that it pushes individuals inside subject-specific domains towards the defence of methodological purity, which in turn mediates that knowledge rather than uncovering its role in ongoing alienation. Such methodological approaches to knowledge production are not relevant for an analysis of the real material substrate of capitalism, or to acknowledge the role played by specific, privileged forms of knowledge production in the construction of the world. This gives rise to, for instance, what Bhambra (2017) calls 'methodological whiteness', through which understanding the world is legitimated through a specific discourse of whiteness as a universal standard against which all identities are heard or silenced.

This highlights the need for a humanist and integrative approach to the generation of knowledge at the level of society, in order to generate socially-useful responses to societal issues. Theoretically this demands a methodological reintegration of science and philosophy, at the level of the material production of the social factory, from a humanist perspective. Clearly, this threatens the everyday existence of subject-specificity and subjects as objective domains. However, if we cannot do this, we simply continue to manifest our own self-alienation and fragmentation (Frolov 1990). The production of subject-specific knowledge emerges from

abstract thinking that alienates *both* that knowledge *and* the structures that support its production, like the University. Thus, knowledge itself is further estranged from the essence of the academic, and maintains an abstract appearance through the academic-philosopher 'as the *criterion* of the estranged world' (Marx 1974, p. 129).

4.3.2 Auditing the Social Function of Academic Knowledge

This estrangement can be seen, for example, in the transformation of the university classroom from an engaged space of 'useful knowledge' production (hooks 1994) to a space dominated by principles of 'excellence', 'impact' and consumerism'. For hooks (1994) the classroom as an engaged space, able to produce useful knowledge, emerges from processes for the shared intellectual and spiritual growth of students and teachers, and their self-actualisation. Here, it is impossible to separate the experiences of students and staff from the mutual production of knowledge that respects and responds to 'ethical questions about how to live better in an unjust and unequal world' (Ahmed 2017, p. 1). The purpose of knowledge begins from a humane questioning of the curriculum, which is the site of our critical engagement with each other.

However, the institutional fabric that shapes the possibilities for the ethical production of knowledge is framed by externalised mediations that condition the socially-useful functions of academic knowledge through discourses of excellence and impact. These discourses in turn reshape curriculum relationships. Thus, in the UK, the consultation for the Office for Students (DfE 2017, pp. 8–9) subsumes the joy of learning for its own sake, and the public value of HE, under: the imperatives of value-for-money and consumer protection; the production of better performance data open to the market; a focus upon curriculum enhancement through potential market exit; and, the reduction of trust-based classroom relationships to risk management. This risk-based approach to classroom relationships then forces academic to commodify *both* their own knowledge so that it can be consumed by students as purchasers, *and* the services they produce to support that consumption. Thus, the reduc-

tion of the academic function of knowledge to private, positional good is an echo of Engels' (2009) description of the ways in which competition sets individuals against each other. As a result, knowledge is produced, circulated and consumed competitively, and forces both producers and consumers to use it to deny the existence or subjectivity of others.

Routinised, national exercises that audit and measure knowledge, in terms of teaching and research, and which seek to measure the excellence and impact of that knowledge, in order to mediate academic life through the distribution of financial resources, are critical in this process (Power 1999). Thus, innovations in the production and distribution of teaching materials are situated against the need to define an excellent learning environment and are specifically correlated with student satisfaction. Some academics attempt to overcome moments of estrangement from audit-based, performance management through a focus on student partnership or co-creation. Yet, in a competitive environment the tendency is towards increasing the technical composition of the curriculum through on-line and digital teaching, and personalised learning, because it is more cost effective at scale and enables institutions to have measurable data on module or programme performance. This also carries over into research, through audits of the impact of knowledge exchange and ways of conditioning the risk of that knowledge exchange, for instance through responsible research and innovation (Wilsdon 2016). Moreover, the production and circulation of academic knowledge becomes increasingly conditioned by the data that attaches to that knowledge, in relation to purposeful usage, i.e. where that knowledge acts as means of production for further commodification and exchange. In this way, audits of the commodified knowledge of both teaching and research, measured on a global scale using an obsession with league tables as proxies for excellence, serve to re-purpose the University as means of production.

4.3.3 Academic Knowledge and (Counter-)Hegemony

The University as a means of production also re-purposes spaces for higher learning that had previously been marginal to valorisation, for instance those in the global South, so that the historical, cultural and

material production of knowledge in those spaces is subsumed under commodity-dumping or extraction from the global North (Breidlid 2013). Here, increasing the technical composition of academic labour enables digital learning objects to be circulated in a relatively frictionless manner, excepting access issues relating to digital literacy, hardware and infrastructure. As a result, knowledge from the global North serves a hegemonic purpose in driving value into new and emerging markets, or extracts particularly valuable knowledge from those markets.

Equally, in the dissemination of knowledge that can be commodified and made available through open access agendas, there is an imperative to fragment knowledge in a way that is damaging to cultures rooted in more holistic views of the world. An attempt to work against this is witnessed in the attempts to enact an integration of bio-knowledge and indigenous knowledge inside the Ecuadorian National Plan for Good Living (National Secretariat of Planning and Development (NSPD) 2013). Here there is a focus upon the integration of a range of knowledges for social-use beyond commodity-exchange, which is also radical in that it aims to push beyond multi-dimensional inequality. The Plan echoes work that emerges from the Zapatista Little Schools (Zibechi 2013), in that it seeks to overcome social domination by an integration of knowledges produced across generations and locations. In this way it claims to be anti-oppressive, pushing against colonial racism and class-based marginalisation. Instead of a life mediated through the market and predatory individualism that tends to be patriarchal, the plan focuses upon diverse vernacular knowledges (NSPD 2013).

This stands in stark relation to the entrepreneurial University and its obsession with the competitive excellence of fragmented disciplines, where hegemonic reproduction is reinforced because tenure and relative forms of security are rooted in the knowledge that is attached to an individual, rather than that which is generated collectively. This underpins the lack of a theoretical position taken by academic labourers about their labour, and the general lack of praxis that emerges inside universities except in specific, exceptional circumstances, and leaves discussions over autonomy, freedom, and the values that universities allegedly transmit and project as a form of academic labour's self-alienation.

Here, we can connect to Holloway's (2003) argument that Marx did not describe the historical, material production of knowledge as objective truth, and instead engaged in an analysis of science as an interdisciplinary movement of criticism. Knowledge as a movement of criticism enables individuals and communities to reveal the perversion of their existence, and the ways in which its fetishised appearance negates its essence. Thus, rejecting methodological purity in separated disciplines, as a form of scientific positivism, is crucial in enabling revolutionary theory to inform and be informed by revolutionary practice. It becomes crucial to support curricula that enable methodologies and the knowledges they protect to be dismantled, as a dialectical movement (Engels 1987; Holloway 2003). Fundamental to this is a re-conception of the social spaces inside which knowledge can be integrated, such that the fetishisation of knowledge as an object carrying truth might be overcome, and the subjectivity of those who produce that knowledge might be revealed. This then forms a resource for building knowledge as a moment of resistance.

4.4 Technologies of Knowledge Management

4.4.1 The Curriculum as an Alienating Technology

A pivotal technology for the reproduction and circulation of academic knowledge, and hence value, is the curriculum (Hall and Smyth 2016). For this reason, it has long been a politicised and contested space distinguished between: curriculum as a body of knowledge to be transmitted; curriculum as product, as a means to achieve certain ends in/by students; curriculum as a process of interaction between teachers, students and knowledge; and, curriculum as praxis. However, inside a drive to enable entrepreneurial activity at all levels, more radical re-imaginations of the curriculum are subsumed by capital. This gives rise to a disconnection between the idea of the curriculum as a thing to be implemented and its role as a technology for changing society, by enabling critical engagement with social issues (Grundy 1987), and to marginalise approaches grounded in praxis, which deny the legitimacy of capitalist social relations.

Here, the curriculum emerges as a disempowering technology for command and control, shaped by: the prevalence of curriculum as product, underpinned by the institutional power of quality assurance and data-driven performance management, and also intellectual property rights; modularisation that deepens the commodification of learning, and thereby reduces the complexity of real-world engagements that are also reflected in inauthentic forms of assessment; digital silos the do not enable students, staff or content to flow between modules or programs, and thereby enable more open or informal, interdisciplinary practices to emerge; the disciplinary use of technology to monitor the production, circulation and consumption of curriculum components, like content and assessments, including use of learning analytics to manage and measure retention, progression and attainment; and hegemonic cultural narratives that privilege and reinforce whiteness, maleness and specific forms of ability as modes of disempowerment (De Vita and Case 2003; Olufemi 2017).

4.4.2 Alienating Performance Data

The market-mediated desire for comparisons between academic abilities, and to evidence how participation in HE contributes to human capital development, is almost overwhelming. Comparisons between individuals, courses, institutions as educational products on a national and global scale reduce practice to financialised data. Increasingly, this is grounded in student outcomes (as learning gain), and its relationship to a measurable learning environment and teaching quality (as excellence/intensity). For Hoareau McGrath et al. (2015, pp. xii–xiii) 'Learning gain measures … can also be used to support accountability, promote transparency and enable comparability of the outcomes of higher education'. For McGettigan (2015) this is translated into policy that seeks to parasitise the idea of higher education by hyper-financialisation, which in turn reinforces social inequality through a focus on premium commodities. In particular, McGettigan (ibid.) demonstrates that the connections between educational outcomes, employability and earnings is being used to create incentive and reward structures at universities, which reinforces

the imposition of entrepreneurial alienation. The ability to demonstrate differential outcomes across programs and institutions is crucial in the creation of a meaningful education market, including monetising student loan debt, and this is predicated upon the quality of information available to investors in that market (Britton et al. 2016; DfE 2017).

Morrish (2015) describes this as metricide that 're-designates universities as mere factories for the production of labour inputs'. However, a crucial step is to differentiate between such factories, and their value-added contribution, in terms of the 'different amounts of human capital value' and labour market outcomes (Britton et al. 2016, p. 6). A connected issue is one of ability bias and signalling (people who exhibit characteristics that the labour market values like a strong work ethic or sense of conformity tend to get more education). Here the importance is on getting better data on the relationship between education, earnings and ability bias, in order to enable employers to make more informed judgements about who exactly had work-ready skills, rather than those who merely signal the possibility. This matters because the market needs to be able to separate 'the productivity value of education from its signalling value' (ibid., p. 5).

What is required in order to monetise HE is the quantification of the student through her whole social and educational life history, so that her productivity/learning gain, and work readiness can be made available to prospective employers. A knock-on is the quantification of the curriculum, including the labour that flows through it and from which derives the surplus value (and profitability or productivity) of the institution. However, and individual's socio-economic background also impacts labour market outcomes, for instance in terms of non-cognitive skills or forms of social capital. In order to succeed, the student and her family must become ever-productive, self-exploiting entrepreneurs, and she must be supported in an increasingly entrepreneurial institution. Moreover, this is increasingly the case for students who are female, and/or from low-income families, and/or from BAME communities (Nakata et al. 2017). The complexity of these oppressions exacerbates social injustice in the university and the curriculum, precisely because those spaces are described from a capitalist universe centred upon white, male, straight and able characteristics.

This process of reinforcing hierarchy and hegemony and the individual, family, subject and institutional levels, is an echo of the warning of Wilsdon (2016), in terms of research metrics. In particular, where institutions are competing for fine margins in income through selective student recruitment (a form of signalling), the indicators used to separate them may drive changes in academic supply and discipline academic labour with unforeseen circumstances, which then reinforce systemic hierarchies through simplistic comparison and narrow definitions of excellence and impact. Performance data signals the subsumption of academic labour under new public management techniques for internalising control and producing value. This foregrounds the generation of a bureaucracy for impact, learning gain and teaching excellence, underpinned by strategies for enterprise and employability, with new forms of quality assurance rooted in risk management. As academics are led towards learning gain, they fail to notice that curriculum metrics form the market's means of hedging against future performance. Equally, there is a risk that they are unable to address the ongoing reproduction of dominant positions that are gendered, racialized and class-driven.

4.4.3 The Curriculum Unbundled

Such agendas are exacerbated by what Hall (2016) calls *The Uberfication of the University*, inside which the academic is coerced into selling rather than sharing access to knowledge, exacerbated by the purchasing-power of student debt. Moreover, the circulation of such knowledge is rooted in limited labour rights, precarious employment and casualization (Lorey 2017; UCU 2018). Hall (2016, p. 14) highlights this in terms of innovations like Teach Higher at Warwick University, through which for-profit practices unbundle different academic functions 'to be able to contract each out separately to agencies with the aim of using competition to improve efficiency.' In an Irish context, O'Brien and Brancaleone (2011a, 2011b) argue that the unbundling of curriculum components through a focus on learning outcomes catalyses privatisation through transparency, visibility and evaluation. In this way, curriculum components can be commodified and exchanged.

Unbundling is exacerbated through educational associations between networks of capitals across a global terrain (Hall 2014; Szadkowski 2016). The market, defined by corporate entities operating as commercial capitalists, is divorced from the realities of educational production as a social activity, and is recalibrated around the individual or institutional production and consumption of educational services and products, including physical and technological infrastructures. However, in this process of commercialising education a tension emerges from the increasingly limited spaces that are available for productive as opposed to rentier or interest-bearing capital (Marx 1992). As a result, there is an increase in venture capital and private equity investment in University restructuring and technological innovation, in-part because they deliver higher levels of short-term profitability.

Yet as Wendling (2009) stresses, the exchange of distinct packets of academic knowledge, in the form of specific habits, skills and capacities, is perpetually a liability for those forced to labour. This is because in an expanding market those unbundled, enclosed and commodified skills are perpetually at risk of becoming obsolete. Moreover, they are always under threat from an increased technical composition of labour. The moral depreciation that Marx (2004) pointed to in the deployment by capital of technology also applies to the labourer's skills, which must be used intensively before they become obsolete. The intensification of work becomes a form of naturalised, self-imposition. Campaigns against casualisation (CASA n.d.; CUPE3903 n.d.) ask important questions about where power lies in the academy in relation to the curriculum. Such campaigns force us to recognise the different strata that define academic labour, and the power differences between these various strata that facilitate disciplinary control, through labour arbitrage and the impoverished nature of collectivised academic labour. As employment is made precarious amongst individuated and separated educational producers fulfilling a range of roles, solidarity and co-operation are negated and ultra-exploitation or proletarianisation emerges, mediated by an unbundled curriculum as a commodity. As a result, the domination of commercial or finance capital drives low prices in the sphere of production, and this restructures organisational forms through efficiency drives or technological innovation.

A critical strand for both unbundling and enclosure is increasing the technical composition of the curriculum. This might simply be achieved in terms of the implementation of learning management systems like Blackboard or through a focus upon learning analytics and data mining, for instance in relation to Pearson's focus on learning outcomes and efficacy. However, through the combination of venture capital and technological innovation, it becomes possible to use curriculum outcomes to make academic labour productive *and* for University subsidiaries seeking to valorise academic labour, through the capacity to commodify educational services and data, and to create an export market for them. As Harris et al. (2012) argue this enables a flow of human capital from the global South to the North, and the amplification of the general intellect through commodity dumping. Here, this enables an attrition in costs realised through a pedagogical model that is grounded: first, in the transmission *both* of core knowledge *and* a specific brand, through a one-to-many reliance on experts, including new revenue streams as commodities are dumped from the global north to the global South; and second, in the use of precarious or lower-cost labour for human interaction, which includes peer/student review and support. A secondary gain is the opportunity to demarcate premium from free forms of knowledge as a new, status-driven, revenue model.

4.4.4 Against the Bounded Curriculum

The enclosure and commodification of the curriculum occurs within increasingly narrow knowledge domains, which are themselves framed by specific social, cultural and institutional limits. As a result, the curriculum as a product limits the capacity of staff and students to respond to crises of sociability, and as such it is a technology that contributes to the proletarianisation of academic labour inside the University (Hall 2015b; Harris et al. 2012). The 'Why is My Curriculum White?' collective (2015) are clear about the alienating relationship between the fragmented and commodified curriculum, flows of exploitation and denial, and the structures of value production, which reflect 'the underlying logic of colonialism'. Crucially colonialism infects not just knowledge and peda-

gogical practice, but the experience of knowledge-production and as a result the Self. Thus, these false or double selves serve to reproduce hegemonic forces and relations of production, as 'irrefutable evidence of white superiority as a matter of truth and objectivity'. Such critiques dismantle the organising principles of the curriculum, and ask both academics and students to question how their conceptualisations enable the reproduction of alienating and violent social relationships, by refusing HE as a positional, tradable good. This highlights the relationship between affirmative self-actualisation and the negative critique of established positions, using the curriculum as a central reference point to explore the subsumption of cultures and identities by hegemonic positions.

The idea of knowledge emerging from an interdisciplinary movement of criticism is fundamental to the idea of student-as-producer (Neary and Winn 2009; Neary 2011), which seeks to recompose research and teaching. Its focus upon research-engaged teaching moves against the categorical separation of scholarly practice, for instance into discovery, integration, application and teaching (McLinden et al. 2015). Instead, the focus becomes practical co-operation in the development of: the process of research; the governance of research; and the production of content. Through an engagement with socially-useful knowledge as mass intellectuality, this points towards collective, democratic governance, radical or democratic research agendas, and work done in/for/with the public or the common, as a radical rupture.

By refusing the idea of the curriculum as a technology of control, it is possible to reveal the possibility of counter-narratives for a process of educational autonomy that must be either recognised/accepted, incorporated/subsumed or ignored/refused (Dinerstein 2015). This activity is a refusal of the curriculum as a Canon, rooted in a specific, obstructed cultural view of the world, which cannot address global emergencies, and instead points towards humane and humanising, collective work. In the process of humanising, the connections between anti-colonial narratives that refuse cultural subsumption and the negative critique of HE are refreshed. For hooks (1994, p. 158), this is a capacity to live more fully and deeply, and to share in each other's intellectual and spiritual growth, and as a result to be 'truly engaged', as a starting point for wider, societal negation of value.

A critical question is whether such a negation can emerge from inside the University, or whether, in order to overcome her alienation through the products of her labour, the academic must refuse or exodus from it and reimagine herself in society. This is an attempt to critique the participatory traditions and positions of academics as organic intellectuals, and to analyse how they actively contribute to the dissolution of their expertise as a commodity. Underpinning this is an analysis of the academic labour of students and staff as it responds to the disciplinary logic of competition and profitability. This demands a curriculum that is engaged and *full of care*, in which as academics and students, we no longer simply learn to internalise, monitor and manage our own alienation. It is only by liberating the knowledge, skills and capabilities of the University curriculum into society that the crisis of sociability that forms a global set of emergencies might be addressed.

4.5 Humanist Knowledge

In attempting to redesign the world, the Free/Libre Open Knowledge Society (FLOK Society n.d.) describe a society based upon an open knowledge Commons, rooted in co-operative values of reciprocity and mutuality. It seeks to predicate new social uses for knowledge upon the deployment of science across a global terrain, but focused upon an ethical economy. Critiques of such positions question whether they are simply attempting a better capitalism, which fine-tunes the dominant order, rather than revealing its structural dominance as a starting point for overcoming. This is fundamental because, as Marx and Engels (1998, p. 42) state, transformation is predicated upon understanding the conditions of development of the productive forces and the social relations that underpin them. A more human and humane knowledge begins from an understanding that 'the being of [humans] is their actual life-process' (ibid.), and points towards the realisation of human essence.

This returns us to the recomposition of philosophy and science, but also to the reality that in overcoming data-driven, machinic enslavement new forms of subversive 'living knowledge' (Roggero 2011, p. 8) are needed. This integrates '[h]umanism in science and scientific humanism',

or the 'human dimension of science' (Frolov 1990, p. 81), as a means to refuse the appearance of capital as 'the monopolisation and alienation of a natural condition' (Marx 1991, p. 633). Inside the classroom, Neary (2012 p. 12) asks: 'How can we redesign the idea of the university to enhance and support this vision of "revolutionary science"?' Such a redesign is a movement of becoming of the individual academic and her student, through the desire of the individual to relate to herself, her life process, her relationships and the things she produces as externalities. Her subjective relation to these externalities, rather than her subjectivation under them, emerges from a dialectical movement of becoming that relates her consciousness of her subjectivity to its subsumption and objectification under academic capitalism.

Such re-imaginings of the role of really-useful knowledge (Johnson 1980) emphasise the work of radical, working-class organisations like the Plebs' League and the Oxford Central Labour College, and then demonstrate a genealogy that points towards specific, labour movement plans like the Lucas Workers' Plan for Socially Useful Production (Lucas Plan n.d.) and academic activists like the Really Open University (ROU n.d.). Such moments of production, rooted in knowledge at the level of society begin from a democratic analysis of the conditions of social production, and a focus upon militant research undertaken in public. Socially-useful production that stands against the inhumanity of value, points towards a transcendence of individual and collective alienation, where the general, productive knowledge, skills and capacities of society become truly social, rather than capitalised (Postone 1993). Socially-useful production, predicated upon socially-useful products, develops interdisciplinary connections and relations of self-mediation and of self-creation.

The lived reality of communities creating socially-useful knowledge in common, demands that academics do not take the University as a point of radical hope. *Pace* Holloway (2002, p. 6), academics must ask whether such practices can refuse co-option by the University as a node in a wider web of capitalist social relations, which define and structure the imposition of work. A hopeless response to this situates academic labour against a lack of power, rather than *for* anti-power, and reduces the productive qualities of the labour to tropes of equality or liberty, or on often ill-defined

practices/qualities like academic freedom or openness. Important here are the mechanisms by which innovation flowing to/from the University supports the ways in which neoliberal capitalism intentionally designs, promotes and manages forms of democracy and governance that complement its material objectives.

This is not to say that humanist forms of knowledge production that are against the University, and which utilise open and emergent technologies of knowledge management do not exist (Amsler and Neary 2012; de Sousa Santos 2007). From the activities of indignant global movements, a critique of the development of academic knowledge identifies opportunities for pushing back against the alienating rhetoric of capitalist work (Holloway 2010). This emerges from two strands: firstly, in being *against* pedagogies of consumption that define the uptake of knowledge through the commodification of engagement and activity; secondly, from the recognition that a critique of knowledge helps to shape the reality and history of labour-in-capitalism.

Thus, at the level of society, a more humanist appreciation of knowledge production makes possible an exodus from the society of capitalist work through the radical redisposal of the surplus time that arises as an outcome of automation (Dunayevskaya 1983). A structural analysis of the life-world of knowledge production, rooted in surplus time and the realm of freedom, legitimises spaces of dissent or protest that underpin new workerist revolts (Bologna 2014). One moment of possibility lies in the relationship between general intellect and mass intellectuality. Whilst mass intellectuality refers to knowledge and forms of knowing that capital seeks to valorise, it also points towards the immanent (negative) and pre-figurative (positive) potential of new forms of sociability. Mass intellectuality implies a struggle over the proletarianisation of labour, and its emancipatory implications, as the embodiment of the cumulative history of natural science and philosophy. From the standpoint of mass intellectuality, an analysis of the ways in which 'immaterial' production or affective labour and cognitive capital emerge from within structures that are predicated upon alienated labour, enables a critique of the relations of production and a critical understanding of the constant drive to innovate using technology (Manzerolle 2010). It forces us to question the socialised production of knowledge and attempts to reclaim the concept of living

knowledge as useful work, and to reimagine sociability or to define activities that reproduce society against-and-beyond value production. It forms a critique of subjectivity that celebrates diffuse intellectuality rather than fetishised academic knowledge production.

The potential is for the liberation: first, of those craft and technical skills, capabilities, and knowledge of the social individual that have been absorbed into the things the academic produces; and second, of the academic from the process of production and ultimately from her academic labour and the sale of her academic labour-power. As a form of sociability that it is not restricted by capitalist time, these activities might structure and determine that time for other, autonomous ends. Struggles both inside and outside of the University, to build counter-hegemonic positions rooted in solidarity and sharing, are related to the social and co-operative use of the knowledge, skills and practices that are created by labour (Hall and Winn 2017). For some, this involves forms of resistance and occupation inside the University (After the Fall 2009; Harney and Moten 2013). Elsewhere such reorganisation occurs within formal co-operatives (Mondragon University 2017; Neary and Winn 2017), or in the educational work of social movements (Friends of the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) n.d.). In the process of reclamation and renewal, a politics of educational autonomy emerges as a form of collective, potential pedagogic energy that is a spiritual capacity (hooks 1994). However, this demands that the products and processes of labour generated at the edges of capitalist work, for instance in education commons, co-operative centres or social movements, are explicitly related to the struggle against the alienated labour process of the profession.

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5

Profession

5.1 Abstract Academic Labour-Power and Crisis

Hegel (1963) articulated work as the conquest of the self through its exteriorisation. For Marx (1974, p. 67) this means that the worker's own activity 'is turned against [her], [becomes] independent of [her]'. The inversion of subject and object, where knowledge is fetishised and comes to dominate its producer and her human relationships, now applies to the labour-process, such that labouring activity becomes a fetish or reified activity that dominates and controls the worker (Hudis 2012). In understanding the *becoming* of academic labour, analysing the interplay between the appearance of the abstract, capitalist world in its fetishised forms and its essence is fundamental. Critical here is finding a means of decoding how relations of educational production, and the social forms of academic labour-power that produce educational commodities, take the form of fetishes. This emerges from the fact that labour-power is itself a commodity, which must be sold or alienated on a daily basis so that the labourer can reproduce herself. In all forms of labour, alienation is reinforced because the 'labour is *external* to the worker', and her work is a

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form of self-denial and misery, which 'mortifies the body' and 'ruins the mind' (Marx 1974, p. 66).

On the surface this appears to emerge from a set of relationships that are mediated by money (the cost of a degree reduced to a fee that acts as a representation of value) and by the law (for instance, requirements to publish data about teaching quality or longitudinal education outcomes). Thus, for many academics, there is a fetishisation of the allegedly concrete form of academic labour emerging from self-critical scholarly practice. This is important because concrete and abstract labour are immanent to each other rather than in opposition; they are the two sides of labour, which are objectified under value. Abstract labour is objectified as social wealth materialised in money; concrete labour is objectified as useful skills, knowledge, practices or capabilities. The concrete and abstract forms of labour enable and reproduce each other, in the relation between use and exchange. This is the social and historical reality of labour-power, which then hides the essence of capitalist social relations underneath its appearance, and behind the backs of its labourers (Marx 2004; Postone 1980). Thus, inside a global education market academics are unable to situate their work as alienated labour-power, which produces a duality of use- and exchange-value like all other forms of labour-power, and which can only be overcome through abolition. Instead exists a focus on the public good or social utility of academic labour (Barnett 2013, 2016; Marginson 2016).

In order to generate wealth, labour-power has to be value-creating labour as an expression of equivalence between different sorts of commodities. This is predicated upon reducing the qualities of different quanta of labour (skills, capabilities, knowledge) embedded in specific commodities 'to their common quality of being human labour in general', through which labour-power 'becomes value in its congealed, objective form' (Marx 2004, p. 142). The abstraction of private labour-power enables capital to reproduce itself at the level of society, through the quantification and extraction of surplus value, grounded in 'the objectivity of commodities as values' (*ibid.*, p. 159). Abstract labour, underpinned by the commensurability of labour-power, is the only way in which commodities can exist on a social terrain, rather than simply being a use-value for an individual. Of course, labour-power as a commodity has a use-value

for the capitalist and an exchange-value for the labourer. Therefore, the sustainability of a commodity-producing society depends upon the *imposition* of work as a generalisable activity, rationalised through reified practices and made socially-useful.

In the move to subsume HE under the law of value, commercialisation, entrepreneurship and knowledge transfer become fetishised tokens of academic excellence. Moreover, attached to reward and recognition, they form the site of an academic's psychological attachment to her knowledge or impact as commodities (Hayter and Cahoy 2017). The labourer consumes herself as she materialises her product, and in return she internalises the objective character of her product. As a result, it becomes increasingly important for the academic to enrich her human capital, in order to maintain her status, and this reinforces commodity-fetishism, by reifying either the products of academic labour-power or that labour-power itself. Thus, humanity is denied as social relations assume 'the fantastic form of a relation between things' (Marx 2004, p. 164). The projection of her subjectivity onto the commodity as it is animated by her labour-power is crucial in the process of valorisation, and in enabling that commodity to be abstracted at the level of society through comparison in the market. In this way, identity politics can also be developed as a productive force or marginalised, depending upon their relationship to value in determining social wealth (Brick and Postone 1982).

5.1.1 The Value of Academic Labour-Power

A starting point for academics in understanding their estranged labour-power is their knowledge, skills, capabilities and practices as socially-useful work mediated by value. Critical here is the expansion in the circuit of alienation caused by the academic's ongoing, relentless need to sell her labour-power and the surplus-value generated by that labour-power. Moreover, competition demands the constant enrichment of that labour-power. As Marx (2004, p. 301) argues, the academic 'seller of labour-power, like the seller of any other commodity, realises… its exchange-value, and alienates… its use-value.' Here one returns to the

mechanisms through which academic labour is co-opted and then *both* abstracted from the circuit of production (in the efficiencies demanded by bond markets or student debt, in competition over the time for production of assessment feedback or journal articles, or through commercialisation) *and* made to appear concrete in the realities of everyday life (in teaching or public engagement). One also returns to the role of academic labour in the reproduction of a society that is based on value production and accumulation, and yet which is unable to overcome a secular crisis of value. Through debt-cycles, knowledge transfer, commercialisation, internationalisation and so on, academic labour-power is used to develop new products that increase the organic composition of capital, or the technical composition of labour. It is also used to develop the human capital of students through the transfer of specific modes of working, skills and knowledge. Effectively, academic labour-power is used to develop the forces of production, which are not necessarily bound to direct labour.

However, value is a function of the extraction of surplus-value from labour. This contradiction between the use of academic labour-power to cheapen labour inputs and its use to develop the quality of future, entrepreneurial labour is a huge contradiction. This is amplified through commercialisation strategies that focus upon technology transfer, for instance in biotechnology and life sciences, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, and green or sustainable technology. Increasingly, this roots academic labour-power in rentier regimes of merchant capital. It also tends to catalyse business change practices inside universities, grounded in flexible, agile organisation, incentivisation strategies, outsourcing back-office functions, prioritising investment in estates, and global competition through internationalisation and endowment strategies.

Thus, it is crucial that academic labour is analysed in terms of the crisis of value formation on a global terrain (Jappe 2016).The recalibration of the skills, practices and knowledge of academics and students undermines their conditions of work. As work is compacted and distilled inside machinery or techniques, the room for autonomy is reduced and objectification increases. Thus, academic labour-power is recalibrated by apparently empirical, objective procedures of classification, formalisation, and identification, as an increasing formalisation of social relations and

thought. The rationale for academic work is externalised, and situated inside the student experience, financial imperatives, or metrics for excellence and impact, such that it becomes a fetishised, reified and quantifiable activity that gains its own subjectivity, and objectifies or subjugates the academic.

5.2 The Conditions of Academic Work

5.2.1 Labour-Power and Academia's Peloton

As academic labour-power is inextricably tied to competition around status, it amplifies exploitation and domination, alongside intersectional injustices, and tends to justify them through an appeal *either* to the University as a site of privilege *or* to academic work as privilege. Thus, we witness statements about academic autonomy, public service, doing what you love, and professional integrity. Moreover, these justifications appear as a form of aestheticism, governed through ideological imperatives of academic excellence and operational practices rooted in performativity (Ball 2015). Thus, academic labour becomes exploitable because the promise of empowerment exists on the same plane as feelings of inferiority. There is an argument that this is amplified because academia is reproduced in relation to its leading performer(s) and their cultures of performance management. Here it mirrors the peloton in professional cycling (Hall 2018; Hall and Bowles 2016), which is governed by cultures of *omertà*, or silence, against exploitation, domination and oppression. *Omertà* is embedded inside a performative culture that enables co-operation, giving certain individuals access to resources so that they can compete. The ideal of co-operating in order to compete structures practice around high-performance and its encouragement, whilst enforcing silence about the reality of that toxic, high pressured existence. This enables narratives of privilege to be maintained. Such professional spaces also demand cultures of *dietrologia*, or the desperate search for hidden dimensions to surface reality, which can border on paranoia, especially in terms of the maintenance of status. Taken together, *omertà* and *dietrologia* lock academics within a culture of sublimated competition, conditional

co-operation and desperation over position and status, which then shape a space in which overwork is normalised.

Part of the issue for academics is the spillover of activities seen as functional into spaces and times for activity seen as more personally rewarding. To push the cycling analogy, she is expected to act as *domestique*, or the significant-yet-servile other who expends her energy to prepare the ground for her team's advantage, whilst she is taught that value emerges only from the exploits of the team leader and those who are seen to win. In academic terms, this means an eruption of narratives of overwork, anxiety and work-life imbalance, including amongst precarious, early career researchers, precisely because they are the only ways to compete in a system predicated upon rank and pre-eminence (O'Dwyer et al. 2017). The constant upgrading of skills, meshed with the persistence of availability for functional activities related to administration and the expanding demands for teaching and research, are necessary inside a system predicated upon the surpluses that flow from metrics and performance data, and the management of risk associated with those data. Thus, overwork or the toxic deployment of individual labour-power tends to recalibrate the academic labour of our peers, to create a productive new-normal in an age of teaching intensity, as *both* a curse (Marx 2004) *and* a form of culturally acceptable self-harming activity (Turp 2002).

Thus, rather than critiquing how her labour-power is put to use for value, academics internalise the question: am I productive and therefore good enough? By connecting this to reward and recognition, this tends towards overwork and constant comparison with others. The defining, status-driven impulse is to increase her value as an entrepreneur through the constant deployment of her labour-power, and this generates a reified, anxiety-infused identity that is amplified through the logic of competition and the socially-necessary labour time it takes to produce. If an academic can turnaround exam papers in four weeks but her peers can do it in three, or if she has time to produce two peer-reviewed papers but another can squeeze out three, and if her performance is based on making her labour time more efficient, then this has implications for those around her. Yet the lifespan of labour-power is shortened as a result of its accelerated expenditure, intensity and overwork (Marx 1972).

This has differential impacts on academics whose productivity through their labour-power is made comparable, and yet who are marginalised through relations of production inside the University that stress white, male, ableist and straight power (Ahmed 2012; Amsler and Motta 2017). Those who have caring roles, or who are expected to pick up the social reproduction of departments and students through pastoral care, or those who are estranged from the institution through structuring processes of methodological whiteness (Bhambra 2017), are increasingly left behind through processes that quantify and abstract academic labour-power. Moreover, they are increasingly marginalised where academic status depends upon the commercialisation or proprietary skills that can be generated by academic labour-power, especially where that labour-power has access to higher levels of resources (as means of production). Here, intersectional injustices are amplified though the performance of whiteness and anti-dialogical practices, which serve to other sub-groups as objects to be dominated. Thus, we witness the subordination of justice and fairness through the lack of black, female professors (Gabriel and Tate 2017). Yet policies for social mobility or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic attainment simply reproduce abstract, reified labour and forms of academic power to be hoarded. At issue is how to abolish labour-power as the source of alienation, and to define human richness as a new form of social wealth.

5.2.2 Academic Labour-Power as Enriched Alienation

Existence inside capitalist work is a constant process of enriching labour-power to avoid proletarianisation through deskilling, the reduction in the labour content of work as its technical composition increased, or replacement by cheaper labourers. In academic terms this is increased because of the large surplus population of teachers and researchers (CASA n.d.; CUPE3906 n.d.; UCU 2018). This means that the preservation of labour-power becomes a battle for life itself, inside a system where the worker is deprived of control over the work process and its connection to the world. This lack of control is increased for precarious or marginalised academic whose work is regarded as being composed of commodity or

leverage skills (Newfield 2010). Such work is regarded as a service, which is not commodity-producing although it may enable students to become commodity-producing. As a result, it forms a useful activity (Marx 2004), but as it cannot be objectivised outside the labourer, it is not productive. This tends to underpin negative narratives about public service work as unproductive alongside an ideological celebration of productivity, which is manifested in HE through entrepreneurial or proprietary labour-power that could generate new academic commodities as alienated private property.

Inside the University, as in any other workplace, the alienation of labour-power means that life is increasingly regulated and governed as coerced activity. It is against this reality that thinking of academic freedom or university autonomy becomes meaningless through their particularity rather than their universality. Projecting such states or values into a wider society that is itself grounded in coerced activity is meaningless. Moreover, what is being projected into society is the value of abstract labour (for entrepreneurship, employability or knowledge economy) rather than new forms of human activity (to tackle crises of social reproduction like climate change or poverty). The key is less fetishized autonomy and freedom inside universities, and a struggle for universal overcoming 'in the *political* form of the *emancipation of the workers*' (Marx 1974, p. 73). Reimagining subjectivity beyond the alienation of activity situates the academic against her continually-estranged labour-power as the sole mechanism for achieving means of subsistence (Sayers 2015). It situates her against her idealised, abstracted, quantified individuality. For Meszaros (2005, p. 91) this highlights the 'demarcation between labour as a manifestation of life and as the alienation of life.'

For Marx (1974), this demarcation is enriched as it is mediated by money, because in the exchange of labour-power for money the worker exchanges her own life-activity, which could be her self-actualisation or self-mediation, for her existence. The compulsion to resell her labour power reproduces the circuit of alienation through the reproduction of capital as a coercive devaluation of the world (*ibid.*). Ideologically, such reproduction is amplified where an occupation, whether status-driven or not, *'assumes an independent existence owing to division of labour*. Everyone believes [her] craft to be the true one' (Marx and Engels 1998, p. 101).

This search for truth through identity and subjectivity is a sacrifice in capitalism because the individual is forced to exchange part of herself, through her labour-power, for wages (Marx 2008). As such, the pivotal role of labour-power in the generation of surplus-value defines the social character of labour, which then dominates the individual as abstract, impersonal labour governed by socially-necessary labour time. This imposition totalises work, governed by external, competitive necessities, and negates collective hopes for the common good (Gorz 1982). Refusing this means taking a different perspective on the transnational imposition of hierarchy and division of labour, not to protect, preserve or renew labour-power, but to abolish it (Holloway 2002). A renewed perspective rooted in self-mediation requires that academics do not wish themselves reflected in the things they produce, rather that they use that reflection to reveal their estrangement from themselves in the act of producing (Marx 1974) as practical, human-centred sensuous activity.

5.2.3 The Alienating Academic Production Process

The capitalist production process serves to preserve packets of objectified labour as a use-value for future labour, where it can be brought to life by being mixed with labour-power (Marx 1993). By bringing-to-life, the material world and academic practices come into contact and no longer appear separated or divorced (*ibid.*). It is in these moments that the academic could appear as an individual, for instance in the presentation of her research or scholarship to her peers or her students, such that her ideas appear as a form of self-mediation rather than a result of the sale of her labour-power. Without tenure, or the ongoing ability to reproduce the realm of necessity through the wage, as identified by range of other precarious academic workers as *labour pains* (Robinson et al. 2017), our relation to our own labour or the things we produce is explicitly revealed as *alien property* (Marx 1993), and our connection with it becomes a disabling form of cruel optimism (Berlant 2011; Thouaille 2018) from which it becomes difficult to detach. With tenure, the separation between the title to labour-power, the production of surpluses, and the reproduction of labour-power are ignored by academic, except where they erupt as intolerable impositions on labour rights, such as attacks on pensions.

From a materialist perspective there is a flow between components of the academic production process that exacerbate alienation. For instance, forms of performance management and workload modelling that can be used to sort and rank individuals in order to justify tenure can also be used to sort and rank individuals with tenure, to 'relegate' them to teaching-only contracts, or to dismiss them. This expansion of the objectifying conditions of academic labour appear as normal and natural, not simply because academic labour is 'a mere accessory' to the substance of academic commodities and services, but also because it is 'living labour capacity' that reduces life's expression [*Lebensäusserung*] to capital in exchange for objectified labour', as the means of subsistence (Marx 1993, p. 462). Thus, Marx (*ibid.*, pp. 462–3) states that labour-power as capacity-to-labour 'relates to its labour as to an alien', and its product 'then appears to it as a combination of alien material, alien instrument and alien labour – as *alien property*'. Thus, irrespective of the status of the profession, living labour-power exists 'as a mere subjective labour capacity separated from the conditions of its life' (*ibid.*, p 463). A meaningful transformation of academic work lies in understanding the divorce of labour-power in productive, academic activity from the conditions of academic production, such that self-mediation and self-actualisation are denied. The explosion of *quitlit* about academics leaving higher education, and in narratives of ill-health, ill-being and overwork amongst a range of academic demonstrates a recognition of the symptoms of this denial of self.

At issue is how to utilise self-awareness across a social terrain beyond the education sector, to move beyond hopelessness and to understand how capital tears down every spatial barrier to exchange, and 'to annihilate this space with time' (*ibid.*, p. 539). A crucial moment in this is the ability of the worker to recognise that in the exchange of her labour-power she is 'absorbed into the body of capital as a cause, as activity', reinforcing her lack of title over anything other than her labour-power (*ibid.*, p. 674). Thus, the emergence of private property from alienated labour ensures that access to the means of subsistence demands the persistent sale of labour-power, and even in allegedly privileged spaces like universities, this becomes alien toil. This is amplified because in the face of an ongoing crisis of value, the need to raise profitability drives an

obsession with productivity in the mistaken belief that this will generate value, rather than simply increase capital's material substance (Marx 1992). As a result, the academic tends to want to impose control over the amount of work she has had to do, as a means of controlling an increasingly external, indifferent and alien power, which is predicated upon the ways in which she makes her own labour more efficient (Marx 1991). As Marx notes (2004, p. 464) the imposition of work 'rivets' a single worker to a single fraction of it, and this catalyses co-operative practices in which we set each other to work in competition.

Education is a core component of the process of valorisation as capitalist reproduction (Marx 1987). Thus, as lever for the generation of human capital in students, in the creation of services that deliver exchange-value through commodification, and as a tradable commodity rooted in debt (Harvie 2006, 2008), we are able to witness education abstracted four a particular social use. Academic labour-power defines new forms of value through labour-power that can be valorised later in graduate attributes for those who bear proprietary skills. This is the ability to act entrepreneurially or to repay student debt. However, in his analysis of proletarianisation, Dyer-Witheford (2015, p. 105) highlights how academic practices enable individuals to engage with processes of design, extraction, assembly, sales, service and disassembly in the production of commodities. As a result it becomes possible to identify how academia prepares students for the explosion of menial micro-tasks in the sharing economy (Hall 2016), which require a generalised entrepreneurial ideology to be embedded across society (Friedman 1955). The exchange of services or knowledge as commodities that can be recombined as new means of production subsumes education inside the social metabolic control of capital, and forms a whole network of social connections reproduced by labour for value, and hence for capital.

As private property, this labour-power is mediated through commodity-exchange and the division of labour, and as a result it forms a further moment of estrangement of the producers of educational commodities from their essence or being (Rikowski 2003). Thus, Meyerhoff et al. (2011) are clear that academics are conditioned by the requirement that they internalise the performance management of their own labour, in part by imposing work on their students and peers. Even where academic

labour-power is being brought to bear to solve social issues, it is mediated through a human existence predicated on the imposition of value and the fetishisation of knowledge exchange and transfer, the creation of new research outputs, and outcomes that demonstrate excellence or impact. Thus, labour-power is a moment of suffering, powerlessness and emasculation, congealed inside commodities that have a being or subjectivity, and which then define and objectifying process of becoming for the labourer. This helps us to decode how value is represented inside objects as 'an objective expression, of a relation between [humans], a social relation, the relationship of [humans] to their reciprocal productive activity' (Marx 1989, p. 334). These patterns of behaviour reflect the real subsumption of academic labour-power, enacted through second-order mediations like the market, money, commodity-exchange and the division of labour.

5.3 Subsumption and the Forces of Academic Production

As I noted above, processes of real subsumption underpin the transformations of HE in the global North as it responds to the crisis of value. This has catalysed new practices of University governance, and entrenched a new faith in metrics formalised across the sector in practices of institutional benchmarking and global ranking. These processes in turn generate new markets for the aggregation and selective exploitation of performance data around retention, attainment, progression and employment outcomes (Britton et al. 2016). In this context, consumer-facing tropes of return on investment such as 'learning gain' or 'longitudinal education outcomes' trigger an impulse to make the control of academic labour publicly visible through routines of quality assurance and innovations like teaching or knowledge excellence frameworks (OfS 2018). Less visibly, institutions scramble for opportunities to extend the generation of absolute surplus value, for example through increased access to international markets, or the removal of student number controls in domestic markets (DET 2016). Together these imperatives drive the invention and implementation of efficiency measures within internal

organisational structures, as institutions seek to apply technological solutions to processes previously dependent on human labour-power.

These measures are aimed at driving down operating and labour costs, in order to redeploy budget surpluses towards capital-intensive activities, estates infrastructures and branding activities. Thus, an increase in the organic composition of academic labour, such that work that involves commodity and leverage skills can be proletarianised, and creating surplus resources for those with proprietary skills, becomes a key terrain for the management of institutional productivity. This is monetised both through knowledge transfer and exchange, and through the development of an unconstrained global market for unbundled educational services. The explicit subsumption of academic labour-power under the law of value is laid bare, and competition in the search for surpluses becomes a compulsion that requires increasingly complex scientific methods and technical solutions. This necessary condition for the reproduction of capitalist social relations across the sector is made visible in multiple innovations in the forces of academic production, which have the effect of inserting the law of value into teaching and scholarship. For instance, the tracking of academic labour in relation to publications, citations, grants and impact factors, as well as student satisfaction, learning gain, and future earnings, is a search for value from quantifiable outputs.

These processes are deployed *both* inside *and* outside the University, using a range of techniques and technologies that enable an academic's being to be persistently animated through virtual, private networks. Such technologies collapse the circulation time for information and cognitive capital, and enable services to be delivered beyond office hours, developing a culture of any time-working and being always-on. This annihilates the enclosure of space for academic labour, such that it becomes expected that academic labour-power can be deployed in the home is easily as it can in the classroom or in fieldwork. This also demands on-going, continuous professional development. While seeking to generate new forms of proprietary capital through educational outputs, capital is always seeking to reduce academic labour-time as a cost factor, to appropriate intellectual work, to extend the work of valorisation into the lifetime of the academic, or to compel academic labourers to enrich that work by enhancing their own labour-power (Jappe 2014).

As a result there is an ongoing attempt to re-shape academic labour-power and hence academic identities, through policies rooted in: risk-management and risk-based quality assurance; workload, absence and performance management; codes of conduct; and, public engagement, including internet and social media use. These serve to reterritorialise HE under the abstract nature of the law of value that 'presents itself as the *truth* of this particular' (Endnotes 2010). The resulting tension in institutional purpose is transferred through the processes of real subsumption to the lived experience of academic labour, where it manifests as an apparent crisis of anxiety. However, this tension represents capital as an objective power in its *becoming*, through ongoing processes of dismantling established practices, in the search for absolute and relative surplus-value. Recalibration emerges from the subordination of *both* the form of labour *and* its content, rooted in the dispossession of space, time (or space-time) and autonomy (Dunayevskaya 1978).

Three key points emerge in relation to the forces of academic production. First, the revolutionising of the economy through the search for absolute and then relative surplus value destabilises the essence of what it means to labour. Second, the systematic governance of human time by capital achieves the violent subordination of space (Marx 1993), materially constraining the possibility of exiting the space of labour. Third, the personification and naturalisation of these abstract processes, as reified traits of high performing entrepreneurs, enables the labelling of others as 'unproductive', 'coasting', 'poorly performing', irrespective of their personal circumstances or structural marginalisation. This generates 'a society entirely subjugated to the economy' (Jappe 2016, p. 399), inside which the search for relative surplus value attempts to make superfluous anything that is unproductive, like care, friendship and unconditional love. *Pace* Mészáros (2005, p. 175), in terms of academic labour-power this fetishises 'the cult of an oversimplified alienated self'.

5.3.1 Technological Alienation

For Marx (2004) technology, and specifically machinery, not only augments human capacities and capabilities, and thereby promises new ter-

rains for value creation, but it also intensifies exploitation. Marx (*ibid.*, p. 547) describes the exploitation of labour-power by machinery as 'hideous', and notes how its potential for liberation from work is deliberately 'misused in order to transform the worker' into a helpless dependent. Increasingly, academic labour-power is valorised by bringing it into relation with a range of technologies over which the academic herself has little control, in line with Marx's (1993) application of the *general intellect* to his analysis of capitalist subsumption. Thus, technologies that enable the governance of pedagogic practice are increasingly enmeshed with technologies that increase the technical composition of labour, like lecture capture. These assemblages enable risk-based decision-making by institutions about individual performance, in relation to critical factors like attendance, retention and progression. One outcome of this is the use of technologies to open-up and monitor labour in order that production processes can be systematised. From this perspective, technology is increasingly inserted inside hierarchies of control, so that judgements about performance can be exerted instantaneously, and systemic risks or barriers to accumulation can be reduced. This is known as 'the cybernetic hypothesis' (Galloway 2014).

Cybernetics focuses upon the science of control mechanisms, through which the exchange of information creates stability. While this is especially important in maintaining the power of transnational finance capital, education can also be seen as forming a critical new terrain inside which digital technology is used to control labour-power. This includes: using performance management data about learning to hedge the financial returns on student loans and bonds (McGettigan 2015); the instantiation of *human* capabilities for flexibility, adaptability, primitive learning and self-sensing inside machinery (Dyer-Witheford 2015); and the deployment of technologies to reinforce hierarchies of power that seek the panoptic monitoring, surveillance and measurement of all activity. Cybernetics is a means of controlling, deconstructing and reimagining academic labour-power for value production, such that academic autonomy is unimaginable.

Thus, educational technology crystallises the power of managers, as they act for transnational corporate networks (Szadkowski 2016). This impacts the practices of academics because the governance and operation

of their labour-power is increasingly connected into wider governing networks of technology corporations, private equity and finance capital, and management consultants, operating through data governance and juridical power aimed at maintaining state and corporate securitisation (Meiners and Quinn 2011). Elsewhere, hacking competitions connect education departments to national security, for instance through the US Department of Defense's Defense Advanced Projects Research Agency funding for universities, with the co-option of hacking as a pedagogy of control (Winn 2013). Advanced work led to a proposed boycott of the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology because of its alleged development of lethal autonomous weapons systems in partnership with defence manufacturer Hanwha Systems. Here there is a threat that academic labour-power is used to collapse the space between the military frontline, the classroom and the living room through research and development, and pedagogies of control.

Thus, externally, academic labour-power is situated inside external, hegemonic webs that are seeking to leverage value from across a wider educational terrain. Those webs then affect pedagogic practices inside institutions, for instance in the implementation of institutionalised communications-solutions based on an integrated systems architecture. The development of such architectures also makes possible institutional surveillance of academic practices and labour, through the recording of activity. It also enables the disciplining of marginalised practices, like the utilisation of open source solutions like Linux, or of practices that are defined outside technocratic norms, where those marginalised practices do not easily inter-operate with the established communication tools. So where staff utilise non-institutionally-agreed tools in their work, this can be viewed as abnormal and as activity to be re-engineered, in part because it disrupts the flow of value. This process of re-engineering is driven further by institutional demands for self-surveillance and monitoring. Thus, the governance of academic labour-power through self-service technologies for workload and absence management, alongside the fetishisation of learning analytics and data-mining, connects academics to the daily measurement of their practices in relation to learning gain, student satisfaction, teaching excellence and research impact.

The technological alienation of academic labour-power is exacerbated because the consumption and production of educational commodities also informs the role of technological innovation as a pivot for transnational joint-ventures. These lock the traditional university structure into global mechanisms for leveraging flows of surplus value from previously untapped sources. For instance, MOOCs have a solvent effect in releasing new forms of accreditation and access to content through platform innovations that harness a range of universities to venture capital and asset management, educational publishers and transnational development organisations. Thus, notionally competing HE institutions are corralled inside MOOCs as a marketplace for their services, and from which the MOOC providers can extract rents. Coursera (2018) is linked to venture capitalists like Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers and Learn Capital Venture Partners, and has partnerships with the publishers Laureate Education and the World Bank (Hall 2015b). Critically, these joint-ventures enable the commodification of the vast array of data collected by open education providers, so that new sources of revenue can be generated through the creation of new services. Value-creation is a function of re-engineering education-as-a-service, such that the student experience and pedagogy can be commercialised.

As a result of these practices, personal data released through the application of rationalised academic labour-power becomes a new form of currency. However, there is an ongoing, systemic drive to reduce the cost of academic labour-power, through an attrition on current wages and labour rights, or deferred wages in the form of pensions (Moody's 2017). Gartner (2013) describes how this emerges in the global North from technological innovation that reduces the labour content of services and products, which is reinforced by underconsumption and weak labour organisation. Moreover, the involvement of private educational corporations signals the possibility that a surfeit of new, for-profit providers will cheapen the costs of academic labour that does not develop proprietary knowledge or skills. This risks driving down labour costs and increasing precarious academic work based on the labour-power of post-graduate rather than tenured staff. Flexibility, redundancy, productivity, privatisation, restructuring, value-for-money, all underpinned by technology, risk becoming the new normal for academic labour-power.

5.4 The Imposition of Surplus: Exploitation and Overwork

Marx (2004, p. 655) related the production of surplus-value and the length of the working day to labour intensity and productivity. Moreover, he saw the management and sustained-intensity of work-time, or the realm of necessity, and the development of free-time, or the realm of freedom, as key terrains of struggle. Struggles are amplified in the disconnection between the material productive forces of society and existing relations of production (Marx 2015). Marx (2004, p. 667) described this disconnect as 'enforcing economy in each individual business', through 'the most outrageous squandering of labour-power and of the social means of production', and thereby creating 'a vast number of employments, at present indispensable, but in themselves superfluous.'

Inside an increasingly globalised HE, academics are compelled to generate an ever-expanding range of educational services or products, and to chase these into new markets, for instance through internationalisation strategies. Academic time is dominated and restructured though new public management practices, which *both* abstract and quantify the labour-power of academics, *and* internalise entrepreneurial, systemic demands for productivity inside the individual through organisational and individualised debt. The system increasingly colonises and co-opts all free time, and enforces yet more productivity through monitoring and audit. Thus, academics and students are subjected to demands for increasing levels of intensity of labour, framed as excellence or entrepreneurialism, across their working lives. As a result, Marx (2004, p. 667) argued that we witness how '[i]n capitalist society spare time is acquired for one class by converting the whole life-time of the masses into labour time.'

Increasingly, governments in the Global North have re-territorialised education in relation to productivity (DET 2016). Productivity and intensified work are centred on an ideological terrain that situates our means of reproducing society or our social relationships, by making 'nations stronger, and families richer… [through] a dynamic, open enterprising economy supported by long-term public and private investment in infrastructure, skills and science' (HM Treasury 2015, p. 1). Such public pronouncements enable us to understand Marx's (1993) description

of how capital deforms labour-power to amplify the general intellect, and to generate surplus-value by annihilating labour costs or catalysing the development of proprietary skills, knowledge and practices. These processes emerge from the abstraction and generalised comparison of academic labour-power on a global terrain, at the level of the individual, the subject and the organisation.

In neoclassical economics, this pivots around individual rationality and utility maximisation, through access to performance data that better represents the quality of academic labour-power in the production of educational commodities or their transfer to students. As a result, there is a focus on student satisfaction, teaching excellence frameworks that drive teaching intensity, and active consumer choice underpinned by data about longitudinal education outcomes (OfS 2018). This matters for policy, because as McGettigan (2015, p. 8) argues 'undergraduate study [is] a stratified, unequal, positional good dominating future opportunities and outcomes', and rooted in the competitive, entrepreneurial development of human capital that needs to be incentivised (HM Treasury 2015). Incentivisation shapes academic labour-power through the control of time and the intensification of work, which in turn reconceptualise the purpose of HE.

Thus, discourses of employability, entrepreneurship, excellence and satisfaction stand as ciphers for the intensification of academic labour rooted in a restructuring of academic relations of production, which then ensure that the HE terrain is opened-up for trade liberalisation. These structural adjustment policies collapse the contexts of historical struggles over: teaching and pedagogy; the idea that students are purchasers, consumers and/or producers; and determinants of value-for-money held by families, taxpayers, and employers. These contexts are described and reconceptualised inside an ideological and entrepreneurial terrain that de-legitimises alternative conceptualisations of HE, and ignores the differential impacts of these terrains on specific communities. Thus, a focus on social mobility through higher education ignores the ways in which accrued social capital affects entrepreneurial activity by students during and beyond study, and how this favours white men from middle-class backgrounds (McMillan Cottom 2016). It also maintains a narrative that celebrates entrepreneurial activity whilst ignoring its root in precarity, which disproportionately affects younger individuals, females and people of colour (Armano et al. 2017).

A knock-on effect is an explosion in precarious academic work, where such contracts deliver the same quantum of academic labour at a lower cost, including through the fragmentation of the curriculum. The role of a permanently superfluous, reserve army of labour and contingent lifestyles that are constantly being reconditioned by global labour arbitrage, amplifies processes of proletarianisation through a lack of access to meaningful employment and the technological annihilation of socially-necessary labour (Gorz 1982; Marx 2004). This process is accelerated as new enterprises are formed as spin-outs or rentiers, disengaged from less productive capitals or institutions, and this is one source of the instability faced by populations who can be thrown from one sector of the economy to another based on profit (Marx 2004). Competition compels universities to drive down on staff working conditions, including new workload arrangements and to increase the surveillance of teaching, research and administration.

Alongside pushing the creation of a surplus, precarious population, academic proletarianisation also catalyses overwork, because the vast number of unemployed or underemployed academics force tenured staff, or those seeking tenure, to overwork or to submit to performance management. These tendencies reinforce each other on a global terrain, such that academics with or without tenure are forced to reinvent themselves over-and-over, and to do the teaching, preparation, assessing, feedback, knowledge transfer, curriculum design, scholarship, and so on, of multiple academics (Dowling 2011). There is an extended risk here to those individuals or communities that are unable to perform a constant benchmarking of the self, and for those with specific responsibilities, like caring, for whom there is an ongoing risk of attrition on their academic assets and of marginalisation through the imposition of, for instance, teaching only contracts (Amsler and Motta 2017). Academic labour-power is recalibrated through methodological whiteness that normalises particular behaviours in the flow of value, and privileges specific behaviours and conceptualisations of the world in achieving tenure or status (Bhambra 2017). This marginalises or silences those who are unable to recalibrate their practice against discourses of excellence and impact, and whose labour-power is not permanently accessible to capital, for instance because they are carers, mothers, disabled or in working poverty.

Where the academic is unable structurally or personally to deliver superhuman capabilities, her labour risks becoming simplified and

monotonous, stressed by arbitrage and competition such that the value of the labour-power realised in wages is annihilated (Marx 2008). Marx (1991) was clear that the generalisation of popular education, for instance through access to debt, enables capital to access labour-power from previously-excluded classes who are used to poorer labour rights and wages. This also increases the capability of the reserve army and exacerbates competition. As a result, academics are forced to self-harm by generating and offering-up their own surplus labour time to the University, in an attempt to outbid other academics for work by reducing the value of the only commodity they have to sell, namely their labour-power (*ibid.*). This is a desperate attempt to remain on-side, and the University-as-competing-business takes this as a cornerstone of its model for grounding growth and competitive edge through exploitation.

Marx (2004, p. 799) describes the impact of this in terms of mutilation, fragmentation and degradation of the self as it is estranged from 'the intellectual potentialities of the labour process', and through which it is turned into 'an appendage of a machine' through 'hated toil' and 'despotism'. Even worse, he (1991, p. 966) describes this as a 'bewitched and distorted world' and as 'mystical' because the development of labour-power across a social terrain appears attributable to capital, such that labour is estranged from its own agency. This is an estrangement that forces the projection of the academic self onto its only forms of salvation, namely either the production of commodities the academic hopes will become social-useful, or the transformation of the student. In both cases, academic labour-power is subsumed under the commodity as a fetish, and in the process overwork becomes normalised, hopelessness is internalised, and *Weltschmerz* comes to define academic identities.

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6

Weltschmerz

6.1 Weltschmerz

In the early Marx, there was a multi-faceted analysis of alienation, which as we have seen focuses on the structuring through political economics of labour-power in the production process alongside its products. Through an analysis of the relationship between academic labour and processes for the production, circulation and accumulation of the value that then accrues from the production of academic surpluses, it is possible to explore academic subjectivity. This is the philosophical strand of Marx's thinking about alienation, in revealing *both* the personal, psychological impact on the Self, and the relation between academic subject and her object, *and* her relationship to her species. This situates the Self against what it means to be human inside a toxic system of production.

For some academics, *Weltschmerz*, or a world weariness that lies beyond anxiety, anguish or ennui, reflects a deeper sense of hopelessness about the academic project. This is a recognition that the world once hoped for may never be, and that the concrete world now abstracted for value may never embody our deeper humanity. In fact, in our abstracted world such despair is connected to a loss of autonomy that is itself rooted in the inability to escape from capital's domination. Much worse is the fact that

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the cultural terrain upon which capital works reinforces within us a sense that we are not productive enough, and that this is sinful (Jappe 2014). Academics are compromised because their estrangement reflects not only their loss of self in their work, but also constant self-judgement through internalised performance management. Thus, any freedom of choice is between increasingly poor alternatives that are perpetually deterritorialised and reterritorialised by narratives of academic excellence, such that there is a deep reinforcement of the risk of personal failings. This reflects a disconnection between the fetishised skills, knowledge and capabilities needed to survive an abstract, dysfunctional world, and the idea of human richness. It catalyses grief *both* at humanity reduced to alienated labour-power *and* an inability to reframe social reproduction.

As one response, new ideas of good/public and bad/private are projected onto the University (CDBU n.d.; CPU n.d.). However, as the politics of austerity restricts academic autonomy, alternative responses include *either* incorporating performativity as a form of false or double consciousness, *or* internalising the loss of what the university might become in order to mourn. Either position risks the development of a new depressive position through which the overwhelming feelings are of melancholia, hopelessness or distress. Overcoming such a depressive position requires a different level of grief and mourning to be internalised, so that academics can address their alienation in an authentic manner, and in relation to wider society.

The concept of academic *Weltschmerz* is rooted in the loss of her labour, as it is brought into the service of value through exchange. Marx (1974, p. 65) argued that this is the logic of capitalism as it imposes 'forced labour' in the creation of commodities, alongside its opposite in the worker who is 'valueless', 'unworthy', 'deformed', 'barbarous', and 'powerless'. Such powerlessness is an act of 'self-sacrifice' (*ibid.*, p. 66) that reflects capital's autonomy in enclosing social or communal spaces, places, identities, and relationships as a means of extracting value. Moreover, through subsumption, a sense of despair is reinforced as we witness just how far the limits to our alienation from space, society and nature can be pushed. Here, our marginalisation is complete where we are not recognised as productive, in the universe of value. We are therefore denied access to the social store of wealth or socialised resources. For Berardi

(2009, p. 73), one response to our subjugation or denial is 'rage and despair' as an attempt to reassert our existence.

However, there is a danger that where it can find no expression or where it remains unresolved because the individual psyche and the world-at-large are so disconnected, it resolves into depression. Powerless rage reflects a deeper lack of autonomy. At issue is how agency, or the reassertion of academic autonomy, might be enacted in the face of an alienating system of social production, which deforms humanity and the environment as secondary outcomes. The question is how to negate rather than accommodate the basis of domination? In addressing whether that world can be superseded across the social factory (Federici 2012), and the role of academic labour in that overcoming, a starting point is the awakening of the academic, as a form of self-revelation.

6.2 The Academic Self

The degradation of the academic self is central to an elaboration of *Weltschmerz* in the context of alienation. Dyer-Witheford (2015) argues that capital forms internalised rituals of humiliation that are rooted in the pain of exclusion, and in the surrender of identity to the production of value, such that self-conception is always defined externally. This heightens the risk of exploitation. Holloway (1992, pp. 151, 155) engages with Hegel's (1963, S46) idea of the 'sheer unrest of life', in order to describe how our social relations appear as a free flow or movement between people, but that through commodification it is fixed into fetishised things that dominate people, and which reflect an ossified, fragmented existence. Thus, Marx (1991, pp. 481, 482, 548) describes human, corporeal existence as 'a mere fragment' and 'a crippled monstrosity', through an 'industrial pathology that degrades workers', which 'exhausts the nervous system to the uttermost' and is 'a sort of torture'. Lordon (2014, p. 79) states that this systemic, pathological exhaustion is a key to capital's social metabolic control, because it 'aims at the *total* subordination of employees', and this is the system's 'total *investment*'.

Subordination reflects capital's title over the alienated labour of the academic alongside its infestation of her soul, such that she is forced to

develop her labour-power in productive directions. Thus, 'human qualities only exist insofar as they exist for capital *alien* to [her]' (Marx 1974, p. 75). This produces the abstract world of value as a social essence, where humans are unable to recognise themselves or organise the world humanely, because the production of value is immanent to alienation. Marx (1993, p. 529) argues that the motive force of capital, its social essence as an objective existence, is the domination of living, human labour 'as a mere means to realise objectified, dead labour, to penetrate it with an animating soul while losing its own soul to it'. Thus, human movement in the world is a condition of the relationship between past and current labour that had or has no autonomy, and which is born as a private, alienable good. This is the movement between *both* the living dead of capitalist work *and* the living death of capitalist work, as past and present estrangement. In the everyday expansion of value, there can be no space for the future self, other than as a potential economic actor to be feasted on by *vampire-like* capital (Marx 2004, pp. 342, 416). In the universe of value, individuals must continually reproduce the circuit of alienation in order to survive physically. Yet this can only be achieved psychologically through huge amounts of denial, melancholia, grief or cognitive dissonance.

For the academic, the promise of status or tenure, or ideas of the public good or academic freedom, catalyse the ongoing production of academic commodities, commercialisation, internationalisation, teaching and research. However, through the ongoing sale of alienated labour a 'perversion of subject and object' is reproduced, because it relies upon academic entrepreneurialism driving surplus value that can generate surplus wealth or private forms of profit (Marx 1991, p. 58). Moreover, this demands an ongoing process of separation, between academics and students, academics and their peers, students and their peers, disciplines, institutions, and national HE sectors. In this process, the academic becomes defined by her discipline or the specifics of her work, in terms of research outputs and impact, knowledge transfer, public engagement, teaching excellence and so on. These things then take on a 'ghostly objectivity … [that] stamps its imprint upon the whole consciousness of [humans]' (Lukács 1990, p. 100). For Jappe (2014, p. 7) this process is reinforced through the absolute decline in the amount of value, which

puts 'value-based society into crisis', through an assault on labour and a rise in surplus or superfluous populations. A question for labourers is how to respond, by defending their privilege or by showing solidarity with those made marginal.

Metrics and evidence-based practice ensure that academic commodities are reified as objects for the ego and become the academic's very purpose. Marx (1993, pp. 313–14) is clear that this process bastardises and deforms the self and conceptions of subjectivity through fetishisation: '[s]ince every object for the "ego" is not only *my* object, but also my *object*, it is possible, with the same indifference towards the content, to declare that every object is not-my-own, alien, holy'. This is a loss of consciousness or a false consciousness, which is a tactic for surviving the ongoing estrangement between human essence and abstract, capitalist oppression through the imposition of alienated labour. As Marx (*ibid.*, pp. 295–96) states 'this is labour separated from all means and objects of labour, from its entire objectivity, and is living labour as an abstraction from these moments of actual reality.' Such an existence is a terrain of 'absolute poverty'. However, crucially he also argues that through this process we can see such labour as 'not-objectified', and therefore as 'not-value'. We might describe this as the negation of the subjective existence of labour in the ongoing reproduction of itself as alienated labour-power or as commodity, and instead conceive of the prefigurative possibilities for labour 'not as an object but as activity, as the living source of value. The general possibility of general wealth' (*ibid.*, p. 296).

6.3 The Collapse of Academic Sociability

It is increasingly difficult to envisage, prefigure or visualise what the possibility of general wealth might be, because the parameters of academic work are dominated by: non-collegial co-option of labour-power or the imposition of workload agreements without consent; the imposition of enforced well-being practices like coaching, mentoring, mindfulness and resilience, which renew academic commodity production; human capital as private property; and the academic division of labour. Together these recompose a terrain of subordination and conditioning, against which

there is a limited defence rooted in academic labour rights against a fetishised, transhistorical system of oppression. Inside an HE system that is being re-engineered systematically, through student fees/consumption, layers of institutional debt including through bond finance, casualisation and precarious employment, and an attrition on wages and pensions, the risk is that academics and students are played off against each other or that sectional, tactical responses are generated. This matters because capital has enhanced its proportion of the total, social capital through a grab for wages, including pensions as future, promissory wages.

These individual tactics, underpinned by governance reforms, signal the need for forms of resistance that are intersectional, intergenerational and that work across communities and sectors of the economy. This is precisely because by separating academics from their means of production and subsistence, capital appears as a set of material powers operating as an alien, external power (Marx and Engels 1998). As a result, academics appear separated from students, workers in other sectors and publics, as well as each other, thereby exacerbating exploitation, as it becomes impossible to imagine activity that is not wage-focused and mediated by the market (Gorz 1982). Rather than celebrating collective work, and redefining the relationship between academic and publics through the abolition of their separation, academic work is increasingly distilled into a process of 'endowing material forces with intellectual life, and in stultifying human life into a material force' (Marx 1969, p. 501). The society prefigured and reproduced by academic labour mirrors the crisis of sociability or social reproduction implicit in wider society, and generates learned helplessness because there is no alternative to educational lives being restructured through entrepreneurship, impact, excellence, or student satisfaction (Tokumitsu 2014). Thus, the academic remains hopelessly unable *either* to re-imagine social reproduction beyond the market, *or* to organise their own lives as pedagogic projects that generate material, social wealth, because the relations of academic production more efficiently reproduce alienation.

For Vercellone (2007, pp. 27, 29) one response is '[t]he establishment of a diffuse intellectuality […] configured as the necessary historical condition', where such a diffuse intellectuality is rooted in the 'transformation of the intellectual quality of living labour'. This serves as a point of

departure for reorienting academic work for a different social purpose. In turn, this demands the re-imagination of academic identities, denied by capital in the antagonism of surplus labour production, fetishism and domination (Holloway 1992). Moreover, it demands the reappraisal by individual academics of how their labour-power is being proletarianised through policy, discourse and technology, as an ongoing denial of social wealth. Through proletarianisation, individual, academic self-identity, or the ability to see oneself reflected in one's research or teaching, or in one's peers or students, is denied. For academics on casualised, precarious or performance managed contracts, the spectacle of performance becomes everything, such that the commodity gains subjectivity at the expense of the human who is reduced to performance data. As a result, the academic's alienated essence mirrors the appearance of the commodity, and enforces complicity in the reproduction of her own alienation and that of her peers and students (Holloway 2002). Her creative power, and as a result her subjectivity, is surrendered to capital as an alien, socially-reproduced power (Marx 1993, pp. 306–07).

The benchmarking of institutions and disciplines, evaluations of research and teaching across national communities, the use of both benchmarked and non-benchmarked national and international league tables are an attempt to impose a measurement of '*labour pure and simple*, abstract labour; absolutely indifferent to its particular *specificity* [*Bestimmtheit*], capable of all specificities' (*ibid.*, p. 296). Thus, the question is less what specific research or teaching is being undertaken, and instead its measurable impact or excellence take centre stage as an alien reality that belongs to others, through audits, inspections, self-reviews and appraisals (Ball 2012). Superficially, this appears to belong to academics, students, the public or external stakeholders, and yet its abstracted essence belongs to capital in its contribution to the generation of surplus. As a result, academic labour's objectivity across a social terrain is its own *not-being* and *not-becoming*, dominated by the asymmetrical power of the objective conditions of that labour. Thus, as the academic continually has to reinvent herself as a form of surplus in order *both* to survive *and* to justify herself as a productive worker, she continually reproduces competition and wastefulness at the level of society (Marx 2004). This socially-defined wastefulness forms a tyranny of dehumanisation that incorporates

means of production, depreciated infrastructure, and crucially the labourer's life and health, which is made meaningless through alienating quantification that seeks to cheapen labour-power as a commodity.

Marx (1991, 2004) places technology and the instruments of labour as pivotal because they not only compete with the labourer but they incorporate the labourer inside machinic networks that enforce algorithmic competition. The algorithm underpins technical and data-driven performance, because ensuring uninterrupted flows of value, demands risk management that reshapes academic practice through estranged flows of information (McGettigan 2015). Thus, the academic becomes the voyeur of an algorithmic spectacle, rooted in student satisfaction, retention, progression and attainment, and impact metrics. In this world, Fromm (1955, p. 115) argues that a complex social machine reinforces the technical machine of capitalism, and as a result the social is estranged from itself through the technical. For Marx (1991, pp. 557, 780, 782, 784), this: intensifies and accelerates accumulation and the technical composition of capital; and enforces the one-sided development of the labourer as a deformed producer, whose skills, knowledge and capabilities are increasingly rendered superfluous by machines. As a result, technology produces 'chronic misery among workers', by cheapening labour-power and annihilating demand for labour, by increasing surveillance, and by using digital tools for strike-breaking (Kenny and Fluck 2017).

This mirrors the analysis of Marx and Engels (2002, p. 13) that capitalism is reproduced by 'constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society.' They continue that this continually generates 'uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation', such that the academic is faced with her 'real condition of life and [her] relations with [her] kind' (*ibid.*). In terms of academic anxiety and identity, one crucial outcome of this is an increase in precarious work, fractional and short-term contracts, casualisation, and the number of individuals with doctorates unable to access tenure. This forms an inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labour-power as a hyper-exploitable, stagnant population (Marx 1991), which risks 'the loss of solidarity' (Berardi 2009, p. 139), that deforms and enslaves humanity (Marx and Engels 1998).

Academics have been nudged towards accepting these forms of crippling enslavement by focusing upon the alleged privilege of working in education, and the self-sacrifice of public service. This has been a way in which capital has been able to compel overwork and exhaustion across a social terrain. For Allen (2017, p. 167) this plays out as 'wilful exhaustion' as a function of academic commitment, care and love. Echoing the work of Brook (2009) and Hochschild (1983), Colley (2011) sees competitive over-work across a social terrain as an individual and collective crisis grounded in alienated, emotional labour. Estrangement from the self emerges from the loss of subjectivity and sensuous, creative practice, inside relations of production with increased technical composition.

6.4 Processes of Subjugation

As a process of reproduction the labour process forms a motive power underpinning the expanding circuit of alienation, A-A'. This expansion shapes subjugation, because the potential of the labour-power inside each individual labourer cannot be realised except through the objective conditions of capitalist work *for value*. As a result, Marx (2008) is clear that the labourer's own life is sacrificed for wages. These forms of subjugation and sacrifice operate differentially across the terrain of production, such that those who are unable to see themselves reflected in hegemonic processes of subjugation, and who are as a result unable to bury themselves as willing slaves of capital (Lordon 2014), are instead buried under capital.

The very threat of the burial of life, rather than simply of one's life activity, generates movements of intersectional self-care as 'an act of political warfare' (Lorde 1988, p. 131), and a moment of transcendence pointing towards the abolition of the circuit of A-A'. In addressing transcendence and abolition, Black emancipatory theory points towards revolutionary intercommunalism, as a movement of collective, intergenerational and intersectional justice, which articulates solidarity with radical, indigenous movements like the Zapatistas (Marcos 2004; Narayan 2017; Zibechi 2013). These focus the transition between wars of manoeuvre and of position as survival pending revolution, and as an explicit refocusing on globalised class struggle that refuses racism and reactionary

thinking as false, bourgeois consciousness. However, as Gorz (1982) notes capital is in a permanent state of open warfare, manoeuvring for the subjugation of labour through an ongoing recomposition of the division of labour and the imposition of hierarchies of collective work. It is here that revolutionary solidarity through prefiguring social production and social activities across communes or communities, points towards changing the means and structure of production in line with collective, autonomous goals that are rooted in the dignity of subjectivity (Newton et al. 2004). This is a critical pedagogic project at the level of society.

For the individual academic, this matters because capital pushes all of social life towards an unliveable future inside which her entire essence is commodified, as an ongoing process of subjugation. Subjugation is the imposition of a hegemonic norms of production, with differential experiences of exploitation, through which autonomous self-realisation can only exist for capital in the expanded reproduction of the circuit of alienation (Cleaver 2017). This is the marking and training of bodies to carry out tasks in specific ways as forms of dressage, which signal the economic value of life (Foucault 1975). Thus, subjugation is systemic *power-over* the academic, such that her labour becomes unbearable and that her life becomes a permanent zone of sacrifice (Holloway 2002; Marx and Engels 1998).

6.4.1 Hegemonic Norms of Production

For those individuals and communities buried under hegemonic norms that are primarily generated in the global North, and who are unable to internalise those norms, estrangement from the self increasingly takes the form of a double consciousness or splitting, and a complete denial of the essence of the self. This is realised inside the *methodological University*, which exists to impose specific practices upon academics and their communities, in order to maintain the reproductive circuit of capital through ongoing valorisation (Birmingham Autonomous University (BAU) 2017).

Such a methodological University, combined with the norms imposed by alienating, methodological whiteness (Bhambra 2017), deny, marginalise, other and silence those who do not fit into the dominant mode of

value production. Amsler and Motta (2017, p. 11) describe the impossibility of motherhood, or of integrating being-mother and being-academic, inside the University that idealises subjectivity as being 'infinitely flexible, always on call, de-gendered, de-raced, declassed and careless of themselves and others.' Thus, processes of subjugation form *subtle coercions* (Foucault 1975), received as ongoing, repetitive micro-aggressions for those who are perceived as marginal to the production of value, such as women of colour (Ahmed 2017). Such transgressions against the self remain unquantified by a system that demands quantification, but they also render dehumanisation as a qualitative moment at the core of material production.

Thus, revealing the gendered experiences of academics who are also caregivers, of younger, casualised academics, of racialised academics whose labour is less likely to achieve tenure, is crucial in generating revolutionary, intercommunal and intersectional solidarity across terrains of sociocultural and political marginalisation. The expansion of the circuit of alienation is rooted in an individual's estrangement from her self-activity, through which she understands herself in the world. For those who experience the world from the periphery, whose subjectivity is colonised, this leads to a range of responses, such as: internalising whiteness, maleness and being-abled as ways of demonstrating that they are exceptional or exceptions; the generation of double consciousness, in order to avoid complete eradication of the self; the denial of the self (Grollman 2014); refusing the colonisation of the self through academic practice in the curriculum (Heleta 2016; Olufemi 2017); and sustaining and celebrating alternative narratives (Gabriel and Tate 2017).

However, inside the University, the expansion of A-A' is also predicated upon the lack of solidarity across academic status groups or communities. As previously secure groups are made marginal or precarious in the crisis of value, they come into relationship with the experience of previously marginalised groups of academics, who are generally of colour, female, gay or queer, and/or disabled. However, as the crisis of value compels entrepreneurial, competitive activity, which itself is defined through excellence and impact that is ostensibly white and male, the possibility for abolishing established social and intellectual capital through new forms of intercommunal wealth is reduced, as intersectional injustice is amplified (Newton et al. 2004).

6.5 Manifestations of Subjugation

6.5.1 Social Fragmentation

The reduced space for abolishing subjugation is a function of its manifestation inside a society that is constantly being reproduced as fragmented, divorced and estranged (Holloway 1992). This social fragmentation, structured through second-order mediations, then determines fragmented and partial forms of consciousness, exacerbated by the conflict between productive forces and relations of production (Marx 2015). As a result of this conflict, academics increasingly see their labour under assault from technology, alongside the imposition of precarious labour and performance management. Again, this exploitation is experienced differentially, because the essence of fragmented social reality, or Marx's (1991, p. 966) '[e]nchanted perverted topsy-turvey world', is experienced differentially.

The humanity of the academic or student who labours becomes an abstraction that is scrubbed of its potential beyond the production of value. Colleagues are compelled by reporting architectures to turn on (and turn in) those who fall below productivity thresholds (Meyerhoff et al. 2011), or who are identified through disciplinary, performance analytics as a risk to the generation of surpluses, for instance students who risk not being retained or progressing. Through metrics of productivity and efficacy, capital continuously attempts to discipline and recondition the future through the selective deployment of algorithmic self-and institutional-management. The result is a cybernetic structure of control that is predicated upon the destruction of unproductive capitals, in this case individual academics or students, and the generation of more productive, entrepreneurial habits. Thus, academics working individually or in teams are *fracked*, in order to overcome system deficits or to release value, whilst institutions seek to shore-up value-producing academic identities through: consultation and surveys around academic workplace satisfaction; and, professional development that mimics self-help techniques, with a focus upon the imposition of individuated responsibility for psychological survival (Hall and Bowles 2016).

6.5.2 Overwork, Anxiety and Melancholia

Overwork as a pivotal manifestation of subjugation becomes an individual's responsibility for productivity, focused upon the production of relative surplus value. At the individual level this internalises responsibilisation, because the academic has a duty to reproduce herself psychologically, emotionally and cognitively to manage the imposition of more work. She is also responsible for the management of acute anxiety rooted in estrangement from work and self, which underpins an expanding circuit of alienation. Here, the widening of alienating behaviours and practices across the terrain of life is amplified through subsumption and the restructuring of the University as a business whose primary purpose is to generate surplus, by re-composing the conditions of labour and decomposing the academic (Amsler 2017).

In these circumstances, the imposition of overwork in new contexts for abstract labour, depends upon the internalisation of entrepreneurial activity that is self-exploiting and which can be viewed as biopolitical. For Berardi (2009, p. 90) modes of internalisation and introjection of self-exploiting activity are amplified for academics as 'neuro-workers' whose nervous systems are constantly reshaped as receivers for packets of information. This is made worse through digital technologies that convert the lifetime of the academic to work-time. For Berardi (*ibid.,* pp. 90, 108–09) this generates 'permanent cognitive electrocution', which stimulates further alienation as 'a painful division of the self', as the soul is networked under the production of value. On a global scale, 'the permanent excitation of the nervous system', mediated digitally, through commodity exchange, the division of labour and private property, pushes societies in the global North between euphoria and panic, before pointing towards depression (*ibid.*, p. 210).

This is psychologically damaging where the desire to be something other than an entrepreneur is disciplined, suppressed or marginalised. Thus, the ongoing public measurement and celebration or nullification of performance through institutional and subject-based league tables, focused upon dominant ideas of excellence and impact, forms a spectacle that makes visible the threat of career failure or suicide, alongside the relative and temporary nature of academic success. In a context of

employment scarcity and a surplus or stagnant academic population, this becomes a significant generator of academic anxiety manifested in day-to-day overwork, immanent to the constant need to perform (Ball 2015). This is underpinned by the constant demand for the construction of a productive educational identity, rooted in repetitive practices governed by expected, dominant conventions, such that command structures are internalised or introjected as a form of self-repression.

As capital attempts to decrease socially-necessary labour time by disciplining labour through the intensification of the labour process and the production of relative surplus-value, it also expects academics to be entrepreneurial and creative. This contradiction cannot be resolved within capitalist social relations, and instead it underpins the constant revolutionising of the forces and relations of production, and the demand for constant reskilling and overwork. A second contradiction emerges as academic labour is subsumed under capital's response to a crisis of value, because this process generates anxiety and ill-being, which compels institutions to invest in programmes of well-being as a response to brutalising manifestations of subjugation. This is an ongoing, ever-expanding cycle, in which the University as a machine for the production of value attempts to deny the damaging effects of the concomitant production of anxiety as a structural characteristic. Through its focus on value, the University becomes an anxiety machine (Hall and Bowles 2016).

Pace Marcuse (1964, p. 159), instrumental control, enacted through the internalisation and adoption of automatic operational systems, forces academics to incorporate negative internal objects. These are the anxieties of the performative, entrepreneurial University as a node in a system of production, which are then incorporated and projected onto others, and reinforced through shame. This embodiment of constant innovation and re-engineering reproduces a sense of anxiety as a permanent state of exception inside academic teams and individuals. The focus on productivity and efficiency, the socially-necessary labour time of abstract academic work, and the entrepreneurial turn across HE, shape an atmosphere of performance anxiety that is governed by the desire to scrape value from metrics, data and debt. This is a terrain of elite institutions consuming and competing, and of individual's competing for educational positionality, future earnings and employability, with anxiety as a crucial form of motive, social energy (Plan C 2014).

In academic terms this includes: first, an individual's teaching intensity, including their class contact, turnaround times for assessment, and developing a digital presence; second, an individual's administrative intensity, including developing strategies for improving student satisfaction or teaching excellence scores, work on committees, and engagement with business process re-engineering; and third, research intensity, including delivering and monitoring the impact and reach, and targets for scholarly outputs and knowledge transfer. Throughout these processes academic work is encased in data that reproduces risk-based performance management to the point where developing a counter-hegemonic position feels hopeless. The concrete educational desires of the student or academic for emancipation are subsumed and disfigured by the abstracted desires of the machine (Deleuze and Guattari 1983). Recognising that the true liberation of our concrete desires, against their bastardisation as data about future earnings, employability and enterprise, requires that we rethink our re-production of the machine, and its anxious control.

Anxiety as a critical manifestation of responses to the crisis of value across HE, is experienced and reproduced differentially. For Grollman (2014), this is unresolved inside tensions that are revealed between the fatigue of social solidarity and personal survival. He is an academic who identifies as 'genderqueer' and who has to choose between 'authenticity and social justice or safety and job security', noting '[t]he very things I should and *should not* do as a tenure-track professor seem at odds with the very things I should not and should do as a Black queer person.' This narrative describes how heterodox expectations are reified, such that the anxiety of certain identities is amplified as they are denied, othered or silenced. Capital's heterodox subjectivity is the negation of individual essence. As a result self-care is lost as a refined form of academic anxiety emerges as an energised response to 'the twofold movement of decoding or deterritorializing flows on the one hand, and their violent and artificial reterritorialization on the other' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, p. 34).

The subordination of academic labour to the violence of reterritorialization as a form of real subsumption forces individuals to refuse all opportunities for rest. The academic future is collapsed into the present and the persistent need to perform simultaneously as a scholar, a teacher, a peer, an administrator, and so on (Plan C 2014). Under these conditions, the academic self is unhelpfully reified. It acts not as a conduit for

hope or courage, but as a container for disappointment in the present and continued anxiety about the future. Moreover, inside a dominant narrative of superhuman, entrepreneurial activity, the only escapes appears to be the reproduction of enhanced performance or self-destruction, as competition limits space for solidarity. Inside fragmented contexts where collective organisation is denied or derided, the compassion of solidarity is critical. Yet, coercion away from practices of solidarity is an intentional function of HE governance that generates and maintains anxiety as the pathology of the academic peloton.

In such an atomised environment, non-performance or the denial of certain types of performance tend towards a sense of hopelessness bordering on *Weltschmerz*, as an empty melancholia both about the functioning of the self and the world in the past and the present, such that the future is foreclosed. Davies et al. (2015, p. 36) discuss this in terms of the psychological damage of debt, which creates a tapestry of failures. This tapestry emerges at the level of the indebted-student or precariously-employed academic, who must constantly ask a series of interconnected questions: 'Did I make the right choices in the past?'; 'Am I productive enough in the present?'; and, 'Will I be able to pay down my debts in the future?' This also operates at the level of the institution, especially those in which bonds or loans, the threat of reduced surpluses, or future commitments in terms of pensions or capital expenditure, threaten expansion in a competitive market. This shapes the context in which specific forms of performance, or social and material circumstances, drive the expanding circuit of academic alienation, in particular for those deemed marginal to the valorisation process. Here estrangement takes on a form that at times is self-mediated by a process of hospicing, or the reality that individuals can do nothing but watch and bear witness to a systemic decline, which rips apart the lives of others and that is utterly out of their control (Andreotti et al. 2015).

6.5.3 Absolute Poverty, Misery and the Denial of Wealth

Marx (1993) was clear that the freedom offered by waged work was no freedom at all, and by reducing the individual to her power of disposing

of her labour, she was left as valueless. Separated from her labour-power, she has to subjugate her life's expression and its essence to the appearance of value. This is an ongoing process of social reproduction as devaluation, which works through 'ceaseless human sacrifices' to make the worker 'superfluous' (Marx 1991, p. 618). Thus, Marx was clear that indignity would follow because labour offers the possibility of general, social wealth and delivers this as capital, whilst reproducing its own labour-power in order to reproduce abject, absolute poverty (Marx 1993). Such poverty is also a function of 'inhuman, refined, unnatural and *imaginary* appetites' (Marx 1974, p. 101) that constitute 'capital-in-process, creative capital, sucking its living soul out of labour' (Marx 1993, p. 660). Capital-in-process is the ongoing reproduction of 'social anarchy' underpinned by the 'reckless squandering' of human life, and which causes 'misery' through exploitation (Marx 1991, p. 618).

Misery is immanent to the constant deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation of capitalism, such that the individual, partially-developed worker has to become a self-exploiting entrepreneur capable of meeting the relentless, changing demands of the system for enhanced skills, knowledge and capabilities, in order to maintain a standard of living. The alternative is the destruction of an individual's productive life, through 'a dialectical inversion' that presents capitalist technologies and organisation as 'means of domination', which 'distort the worker into a fragment of a [human]' by degrading *both* the content of her work *and* her self as an autonomous producer (Marx 1991, p. 799). Marx (*ibid.*) describes this as 'despotism', through which the worker's life becomes pauperised and consumed by working-time, which in turn destroys her life beyond work because she is riveted to capital. This is the abstracted deformation of individual subjectivity (Kurz 1991), exacerbated because work is decomposed and commodified as packets of information rooted in quantifiable time.

Emergent narratives from inside academia highlight its ongoing degradation and deformation, as an expanding circuit of misery. Gill (2009) speaks of a range of emotional injuries rooted in stress, anxiety, shame, and being made to feel an impostor, which then reveal a range of physical manifestations in exhaustion, insomnia, and addictive behaviours (Lazzarato 2014). Here, misery and denial are combined in moments of

overwork through the shame of not being productive enough, and cultures of *omerta* reinforce this process. As a result, academics are conditioned to strive to be perfect neoliberal agents, with their neural networks programmed to maintain the circulation of affect, cognition, data, information and performance. The academic soul is therefore implicated in the production, circulation and accumulation of institutional surpluses.

The management of academic life, through absence management, workload management, codes of conduct, and so on, underpins this process. Internalised, non-negotiated policy enables managers to obligate academics to report bodily or psychological failings, such that specific, able bodies are normalised, whilst bodies that fail are deemed abject (Amsler 2015). Thus, these narratives need to be seen in the context of processes that are assault on academic labour rights, for instance casualisation and precarity, and those that transfer proportions of the total social capital from labour to capital, for instance the transfer of pension risks from institutions to individuals. Following Jappe (2016), this process of immiseration catalyses further anxiety amongst academics and their families who depend upon the ability to valorise their labour-power. Immiseration is immanent to commodity-fetishism that reproduces the alienated academic as 'a *mentally* and *physically dehumanized* being… the *self-conscious* and *self-acting commodity*' (Marx 1974, p. 111). This is a site of academic hopelessness.

6.6 The Estrangement of Academic Labour from Society

The seat of academic *Weltschmerz* lies in the academic's enforced compact with relations of domination, which she reproduces. This is reflected in a wider hopelessness rooted in the inability of the University to effect any meaningful engagement in civil society with global emergencies. These are a reflection of a wider hopelessness that is rooted in the societal inability to overcome the separation of subject from object in a society of commodity-fetishism. This fetishism stretches to cover identities of academic or student, or tenured and non-tenured, or professor and non-professor, and as a result academic capitalism denies a humane existence.

Inside status-driven lives, insecurities and compromises mean that academics are stripped of their ability to work co-operatively. The backdrop to the enclosure of pedagogical lives is the closing-down of academic ability, through the University, to engage with symptomatic socio-environmental or socio-economic crises that form visible ruptures from the crisis of value.

This is the alienation and subsequent hopelessness of intellectual dispossession that deforms academic practice and identity. Atomisation and automisation cannot enable liberation or agency or the reassertion of academic autonomy. The technological system that valorises capital itself co-opts and reproduces social relationships that it then attempts to modify or destroy. Academics are constantly torn between social (re)combination and individual atomisation or entrepreneurialism. At its worst, this describes forms of self-mutilation projected into the heart of the machine of value. Thus, the academic is increasingly estranged from society as she reflects a reified, highly mediated form of social production, rooted in commodity, privatisation, quantification and status. There are two key outcomes to this social estrangement: it limits the possibility for co-operative practices of solidarity across society; and it denies even the most apparently fortunate of lives the ability to realise the potential for happiness.

Instead, the fragility of those academic lives is a function of academic liquidity or illiquidity, in enabling individuals to invest or be invested in, because they have worth. Where that worth is the site of valorisation, it can be speculated upon. Through the governance of metrics, excellence and impact frameworks and international league tables, measures of individual worth collapse into the comparison and exchange of academic commodities. The ongoing abstraction of academic labour and its subsumption under value, adds additional forms of mediation between the academic and society, and expands the circuit of alienation, A-A'. Even worse, certain academics are deemed too marginal for investment, such as: early career researchers whose work cannot be valorised in the short-term; those who have caring responsibilities and who cannot commit their life to work; those working in creative or arts-based disciplines with lower returns through earnings; those whose health compromises productive capacity; and those who question the imposition of hegemonic

norms related to excellence and impact. As a result, some academics are reduced to partial employment deemed to be of lower status, for instance, on teaching-only contracts or with limited research allocations that deny the academic's total experience. This internalises particular forms of moral subjectivity, and ensures that the circuit of academic alienation is aligned with the circuit of social reproduction.

6.7 Against Hopelessness

Sitting with and then teaching hopelessness, as an authentic pedagogic moment that can be worked upon and moved past, is important in recovering the dignity of the self. Engaging with the internalisation of anxiety and its projection into the world as fear is a means to work through this hopelessness, and to recover a more authentic sense of what the self might be in the world. Yet this demands that academics reveal what frames their abstracted reality, and the estrangement of self/subject from object. This also asks academics to accept and engage with what exactly is generating anxiety, hopelessness, *Weltschmerz*. This pushes against a monstrous deformation of the self through academic labour, in order to move towards a renewed subjectivity that reveals the essence of what is to be human. This is a world that is more adequate for human existence, inside which the status-driven, private property of academic labour can be overcome. It must be overcome because it is the seat of the academic's disconnection with society and herself. Her alienated labour is the site of her hopelessness and her *Weltschmerz*.

Here, the lessons of marginalised communities that have sought to generate wars of position and ideological resistance are crucial. These point to prefigurative practices that: are collective and organised rather than private and reactive; are principled and selfless rather than opportunistic and selfish; must have revolutionary consequences; and, must negate rather than accept the basis of domination (Dinerstein 2015; Motta 2017). As a process of reframing institutions of resistance, in order to infuse them with material and ideological potential, this is a moment of connecting the individual to her potential for solidarity through social strikes, social projects, or social research, each of which are collective and

happen in public, and are militant (Milburn 2015). In this process, the curriculum-as-praxis is critical as a means of negating the basis of domination (Ahmed 2017), through a dialogical analysis of the specific situation, a means of organising space and practice, and the development of specific forms of radical or revolutionary consciousness. The idea is to stitch academic labour into the heart of society, not through the hopelessness of the law of value, but through engagement in meaningful collective programmes that enable communities to work co-operatively, intercommunally, intergenerationally and intersectionally to save themselves materially (Narayan 2017; Newton et al. 2004).

It is important to prefigure practices that question the governance and content of HE and its relationship to society, mediated by the toxic domination of the rule of money that perverts pedagogic practice and classroom relationships. Here, moving beyond academic hopelessness means that academics must confront the ongoing antagonisms emerging from the crisis of value through solidarity. As a growing surplus population drags the experience of exploitation and immiseration from the margins of academic society into its core, through performance management and precarious employment, there is potential for indignation and degradation to be generalised. At issue is how to place transformation of the mode of production at the heart of the matter, rather than amplifying hopelessness. As practices from the racialised, gendered, disabled, homosexual and queer margins of the global North and the global South move back to the centre of production, engagement in survival programmes as a precursor to dismantling the mode of production, are crucial for academics. Academic privilege and hegemonic, alienating academic norms need to be checked by learning from alternative life experiences. This demands a new war of position in the name of survival pending revolution, rooted in co-operation and accepting of the reality that Keynesian, welfare capitalism cannot be reinstalled. Instead, academic hopelessness needs to stimulate an alternative social function as the basis for abolishing wage labour.

Academic practice might create space and time for counter-hegemonic practices at the level of society, 'in order to reweave the fabric of the social relation' (Berardi 2009, p. 213). Crucial here is the reality that workers are shaped by alienation but are not necessarily

blinded to the realities of capitalist society. Across the social terrain, intellectual labour is crucial in revealing the necessity of alienation as a moment of struggle, through which the abolition of academic labour becomes possible where intellectual work is recomposed as mass intellectuality. The question is how to generate forms of solidarity and association that will enable us to combat *both* the automatic subject of capital, *and* the way in which it forces us to deform and degrade ourselves.

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7

Identity

7.1 Species-Being

7.1.1 Self-Mediation

In *The German ideology*, Marx and Engels (1998) articulate how the mechanisms through which capitalist society is mediated and structured transform personal relationships into powers that can be materialised. Moreover, inside a society through which metabolic control is maintained by the law of value, a revolutionary transformation demands the abolition of these second-order mediations. They (*ibid.*, p. 86) are clear that such a transformation is predicated upon communal self-re-imagination and self-mediation, because '[o]nly within the community has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; hence personal freedom becomes possible only within the community.' They are clear that this is impossible under liberal institutions like the State, which work to support accumulation. Thus, under capitalism the appearance of community is illusory, and co-operation is predicated upon value in opposition to the individual and her associations. This means that the community catalyses and is catalysed by the abstract appearance of status, which is used to reinforce hierarchy, in order to

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amplify control and the production of surpluses. This is why they talk about the '*real* community' obtained through self-mediation in association (Marx 1974, p. 92).

This self-mediation is grounded in the positive power of saying *No!* (Holloway 2011), as a precursor to the abolition of those instruments of mediation that kettle and deform life, beginning with alienated labour as the distilled form of private property inside capitalism. Crucially, Marx and Engels (1998) are clear that this can only occur through the all-around development of individuals, because capitalist social relations and forces of production are totalising. Here, the argument is that self-mediation enables a re-imagination of social relations and forces, in order to convert them 'into free manifestations of their lives' (*ibid.*, p. 74). This is a constructive reimagining that forces us to reconsider how persistent crises of value consistently degrade community relations, in order to overcome those relations and define a new anti-productive environment.

7.1.2 Human Nature

In this earlier, philosophical stage of his work, Marx referred to these forms of productive, positive associations, which rooted community or collective, social metabolic control in an alternative conception of the world, as a radically different form of human nature, *species-being* (*Gattungswesen*). This is a reflection on Hegel's (1963 §§182–3, 220–1) 'system of all-round interdependence', through which 'the subsistence and welfare of the individual are interwoven with, and grounded on, the subsistence [and] welfare… of all, and have actuality… only in this context'. For Hegel (1963), inside civil society, with a focus on universalism, the reconciliation of the individual with her community occurs through a dialectical movement between the particular and the universal. Yet, for Marx, inside capitalism this form of community is continually distorted, such that its appearance is a manifestation of material production, which defines a specific form of existence. In the focus upon individuals in associations working collectively to define new forms of self-mediation, the return of species-being might then be immanent to struggles that are intersectional, ecological, against globalisation and so on.

Dyer-Witheford (2004, p. 7) focuses understanding and then reimagining species-being in struggles over the form of social metabolic control underpinning 'ceaseless species self-development', so that the species becomes self-augmenting beyond value. Where these struggles point towards the social strike or social solidarity, or towards solidarity economies or new forms of co-operation that are anti-value, there is a possibility for creating actually existing communism as a form of intercommunalism (Newton and Lenin 2004). For Marx (1974), this emerges from planned co-operation which develops knowledge, skills and capabilities at the level of the species, through which the community becomes the object of humanity. It is a revolutionary association of communities that seeks to abolish the reproduction of relations of production grounded in the mediation and division of alienated labour, which emerge as fetters when aggregated from the individual to the level of society. Instead it amplifies a framework for social solidarity predicated on developing new forms of social wealth beyond value.

In spite of the dynamic potential of humanity for material reimagination, there is a need to question whether the sequestration of power of social metabolic control by specific classes or strata can be overcome for the common good. This is amplified because relations of production have locked certain communities and groups into providing specific forms of production or services that maintain hierarchies, for instance domestic work and the reproduction of households, or the production of components in low-wage economies (Dyer-Witheford 2015; Hall 2015b). Capital is constantly seeking out new terrains for valorisation including bodies and affects, through biopolitical moments of control (Berardi 2009). For Marx (1974) this is an extension of the material of private property across the terrain of estranged human life, and as such it forms a movement of production that seeks to strip the individual from her humanity, and reify the abstract labour-power of the species. It may be that the extension of this material, private property into the bodily and emotional fabric of the human, makes our estrangement and dehumanisation more visible, as witnessed in intersectional narratives of academic ill-health and ill-being (Hall and Bowles 2016). Analysing these against an analysis of their mode of production, enables us to understand how capitalism marks social relations with a particular social appearance, and distorts the essence of our social being (Marx 1974).

7.1.3 Estranged Academic Essence

The alienated nature of labour continually works to reproduce species-being, or human nature, as something estranged from human essence, because the development of human skills, knowledge and capabilities (or qualities) is rooted in competition and exchange, and governed by money. Thus, human activity is an ongoing process of self-alienation revealed as an objective power, whereby the products and process of labour estranged from the individual and fetishised (Clarke 1991), to the benefit of the capitalist through the social division of labour. Moreover, she is alienated psychologically from herself and her real community, because that process of fetishisation emerges from abstract production and exchange, in order to generate value. Thus, exchange-for-value, mediated by private property, is the fetishised appearance of society, which confronts and subordinates individuals.

We might use species-being, or the material reality of human nature, in order to analyse academic sociability and in particular the ways in which the crisis of value infect academic life, such that it is unable to insert itself across a social terrain beyond the arbitration of the market. In part, proletarianisation underpinned by precarity and surplus populations, and mediated by alienated labour, pushes academic labourers towards the maintenance of status and divisions, rather than abolishing this as a means of identification. This questions whether academic labour can be against itself, in order to overcome its estrangement from its human essence and society, rather than naturalising specific activities, discourses, occupations or statuses as ontologically pure (Frolov 1990, p. 244; Kitarō 2012). Here norms expressed as commercialisation, excellence, impact, incentivisation, retention, satisfaction and so on, confirm capitalist social relations as an idealised human essence. As a result, becoming against academic labour, in order to abolish or transform it at the level of society, must emerge from a rejection of such hegemonic, powerful norms.

Crucially, this means that emergent, precarious, intersectional experiences and traditions form a really-existing terrain through which abolition might be defined through a set of mobilising examples (Mészáros

2008), which themselves reveal the conditions of existence of species-being under capital. Thus, it becomes important to reimagine academic society calibrated less by the peloton and high-performing professors, and instead to focus upon academic inequality, *both* to uncover alienated labour at its heart, *and* to overcome the international structures of competition that reproduce systemic inequality and differential exploitation. Re-imagination stands against the idealisation of the abstract individual mediated in the market. As a result, it reveals: first, how the University is being re-engineered to reproduce inequality and immiseration; and second, how the cares, attitudes and needs of students and staff are further estranged from self and society because they reinforce the need for alienated labour. Overcoming these alienated mediations and transcending, overcoming or abolishing alienation depends not on abstracted ideals of academic freedom or institutional autonomy, or fetishised values locked inside institutions that are being made unsustainable, but on concrete practices aimed at an alternative form of social metabolic control.

This underpins the possibility of overcoming such an estrangement from what it means to be human, in particular where alienation is revealed as ways of living that are being made unsustainable. This might include the increases in student debt, the increase in precarious employment or casualization, the reduction in costs (wages) of teaching at the expense of investment in capital infrastructure and buildings, the intolerance of dissenting positions on campus, and so on. In this process, it is little wonder that we witness an increasing number of narratives focused upon the estrangement of academics from their profession, which can only offer satisfaction because it is a terrain for wage-labour rather than self-mediation. Marx (1974) describes this as a form of compound estrangement from an individual's life activity and her 'species being'. The focus on these innovations in the production, circulation and accumulation of capital, which situate academic life for-value, also reorient the relationship between HE and society. That relationship is reified, and defined through abstract labour as the negation of sociability. As her labour is increasingly governed by competition, and where the discourses of academic production governing innovation focus upon entrepreneurship, employability, excellence and impact, the academic is increasingly dehumanised and devalued.

Overcoming then begins from the totalising nature of capital, which has subsumed the co-operative potential of species being as a natural gift, and used it to develop the partial nature of academic labour. This is amplified through institutional negation to become an alienated, abstracted, commodified essence, the appearance of which is a deformed, fetishised sociability (Kitarō 2012). The real ground of life is human and humane realisation in society (Dunayevskaya 1978). Here, the barriers imposed by metrics in defining academic life and in imposing forms of academic identity must be addressed. In particular, the appearance of scientific abstraction, which imposes classification, quantification and identification through fetishism and reification, needs to be challenged by academics rather than reproduced through value-based, competitive innovation. Such forms of abstraction and quantification enable ideologies of student-as-consumer and education for the market, entrepreneurship or employability to take root, as dominant modes of thought that appear to be natural but alien to the academic, whose autonomy is only defined socially in terms of the elements of those phenomena that can be exploited individually. This is a denial of subjectivity, and a generation of further layers of alienation (Hudis 2012).

Cleaver's (2017, p. 111) focus upon *reflexive mediation* shows how the academic's relationship to herself is mediated in a way 'that reflects some aspect of the [academic] back to [herself], as a mirror reflects an image back to the person looking into it.' Thus, the individual (and her identity) is brought into relationship with something else, such as the knowledge she produces or her peers. Cleaver (2017, p. 126) goes on to discuss *syllogistic mediation*, through which two things are mediated by a third, so that two individuals are brought into relationship through exchange or the division of labour. This is important because it forces us to ask questions about the apparent benefits for some academics from the process of mediation. Our responses might focus upon status, access to resources, perceived security, the need for validation, and so on. However, it is important that we are able to reflect upon the social generation of reflexive mediations, and how they interact inside a competitive, transnational and instrumental environment, shaped by explicit, hegemonic norms and practices.

7.2 Intersections of Identity, Hegemony and Value

7.2.1 Whitewashed Academic Norms

Whitewashed academic norms form a barrier, boundary or frontier to be passed through or transgressed, or by which individuals might be repelled (Ahmed 2012, 2017). Issues of colourblind academia, seeking to align itself with issues of social justice through diversity agendas like the BAME attainment gap and accreditation regimes like Athena Swan, enable institutions to claim inclusion. As a result, there is limited institutional engagement with, for instance, critical race theory and themes of: organisational and cultural whiteness; the psychological impact of introjected or internalised hegemonic cultural norms; the problematic of exceptional cases and 'lactification', whereby certain, entrepreneurial people of colour are celebrated; the psychological impact of individuals having to maintain a double-consciousness or prioritising a false consciousness to survive; everyday micro-aggressions in organisation and communication, including an ongoing lack of support; the disciplining of unexpected (non-privileged) behaviour, and behaviour that is unaligned with dominant norms; racial battle fatigue for individuals and communities who cannot see themselves reflected in the organisation or its content/curriculum, in part because race is permanent; and, a Eurocentric approach to the curriculum and its organisation (Heleta 2016; Olufemi 2017).

Arising from this is a culture of perceptual segregation, whereby colourblind norms and pervasive prejudice are internalised. Inside a system of valorisation, this fetishises established identities as essences, and there is an argument for resisting intersectional analyses, which risk becoming additive and reductive forms of identity that reify fragments of an individual's existence (Harris 1990; Mohanty 2003). The preservation of capitalist relations of academic production is underpinned by the alienation of the worker/academic from other workers/academics, and this is enabled by treating gender, race, sexuality as fixed and quantifiable, and underpinned by standpoint epistemology. One outcome is that institutions either make empty gestures through concepts like gender equality

and diversity, which serve to legitimate deep and intersectional inequalities through processes of normalisation, or address symptomatic injustices like gender or racial pay differences, without having to face structural inequalities.

A broader set of issues arise from this in terms of who, in this process, can be fused with capital in order to generate value, and why? Who identifies with capital and its drive for valorisation, and why? This risks creating a whole series of false binaries that deny our ability: first, to listen to narratives of exploitation and othering that challenge our construction of the world; and second, to theorise those differential experiences, in order to frame an alternative way of producing the world. For Kitarō (2012, pp. 127–28, 130), this process of fetishisation matters because it creates a gendered, male association or female dissociation with value and abstract labour. Crudely, male work is seen as abstract and productive, whilst female-determined work predetermines and lacks exchange-value. Thus, in the 'commodity-producing civilizational model [value production] has its foundation in the oppression and marginalization of women and the simultaneous neglect of nature and the social' (*ibid.*, p. 130).

A crucial moment in this process is revealing how capital's expansion is underpinned by the commodification of the self, in terms of self-identity, self-expression, engagement in community, skills, knowledge, capabilities and affects. Here, perception matters, in terms of uncovering the appearance of the world from multiple perspectives so that an individual's essence might be recovered from a life defined by labour. This is important because labour is a fight for survival rooted in expansion and valorisation, and which emerges against a specific form of entrepreneurial activity that is white and male and that depends upon the exploitation of global, social reproductive labour that lacks privilege (Kofman and Raghuram 2015). For McMillan Cottom (2016) entrepreneurs are generally white, male and highly educated, with inherited family wealth, and because there are significant differences in wealth, access, scale and success amongst entrepreneurs who are white and male and those who are not, to succeed as an entrepreneur is part of the *hustle*. Engaging with the *hustle* as a form of self-estrangement also means reinforcing interlocking, systemic, entrenched and inherent conditions of poverty, exploitation and inequality.

Thus, inside the academic peloton, reputational advantage emerges from white male success and social capital as a psychological system of control, with specific forms of self-disciplining activity. In this mode of existence, entrepreneurial activity depends upon the exploitation of huge numbers of service workers who maintain that existence through the reproduction of the home and workplace, and for whom being black and female represents double jeopardy (Amsler and Motta 2017; Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra 2013). Moreover, it also rests upon the exploitation of readily-oppressed fractions of productive labour in the global South, for instance in the manufacture of components for high-technology industries (Dyer-Witheford 2015). Race, disability, gender and sexuality are crucial in re-imagining resistance and alternatives as ongoing, anti-oppressive action, in the movement towards non-identity (Adorno 1966). This is the negation of 'the wrongness of the world' (Holloway et al. 2009, p. 8) and its 'constituted untruth' (Bonefeld 2014, p. 40). Untruth reflects how the system of capital organises 'social relations of human reproduction that assume the form of the movement of economic things, which objectify themselves in the person' (*ibid.*, p. 196), based on reified, social characteristics.

7.2.2 Fetishised Academic Masculinity

Hegemonic social characteristics pivot around masculine performance inside the University, and how that transmits self-harming activities throughout the academic peloton. This is materialised, for instance through overwork or through aggressive management, such that hooks (2000) states the ideological violence of patriarchy emerges from self-mutilation, reflecting the reproductive rituals of power. As a crucial node in the reproduction of status-driven overwork and ill-being, the University is central to these forms of estrangement from the self and from society, especially for those who can be othered as a means of maintaining privilege. These forms of estrangement are mediated by increasingly commodified selves operating for-value in the market, and governed by very specific status distinctions as an imposed division of labour.

Fetishised white masculinity is crucial to the reproduction of these normalised spaces because it defines power, in terms of access to institu-

tional senior management and professoriate (Heijstra et al. 2017; O'Connor et al. 2015). This means that whilst diversity strategies point towards mobility and fluidity, hegemonic power tends to be stable in terms of who can move through institutions (Ahmed 2012). Inside a biopolitical and performative space, individuals have constantly to perform their gender or deny their race in order to succeed (Styhre 2018). Such performance is relational in that it is influenced by and influences peers, and as a result it creates a terrain of social surveillance, linked to identity. Here we witness unconscious bias infecting the relationship between marginalised academics and the fetishised demands of students, such that female faculty of colour have worse evaluations and doubts cast about their expertise (Gabriel and Tate 2017). As a result, such staff have to validate and assert themselves constantly and in ways that are exhausting, including developing the double consciousness of having *both* to exist as oneself *and* to demonstrate belonging to an alternative ideal (du Bois 2016).

This forms an ongoing, cultural taxation for faculty of colour, whose tenure enables certain, institutional diversity metrics to be met, whilst individual performance management aligns those bodies and quantifies those bodies against dominant norms. As a result there is a requirement for these academics to become exceptional or ideal role models who are encased in layers of self-estrangement. Moreover, there is a hidden expectation that they will undertake disproportionate amounts of emotional labour, including support for the mental health of marginalised students and peers (Joseph and Hirshfield 2011). This is especially the case where the diversity of the student body is not reflected in the diversity of the academic staff, a limited number of whom are then expected to perform exceptional quantities of emotional labour. The alternative is to struggle permanently for their own becoming against systemic mediations that act as concrete barriers (Ahmed 2017).

Thus, in addressing the relationship between academia and alienation, it is critical to communicate and act from our own position and self-identity, but in order to uncover and abolish power we must make room for other positions. Through feminist theory, Amsler (2014) calls for 'democratising critical, anti-patriarchal forms of thought and ways of life.' This is important because an English, Marxist perspective has

appeared neglectful of intersectional considerations, including the impact of alienation mediated through gender, race, (dis)ability and sexuality on embodied, emotional or psychosocial oppression (Chattopadhyay 2017). In a consideration of the production of society inside capitalism, privileging productive labour and its manifestations in specific analyses of class that are white and male do little to overcome hegemonic norms (Federici 2012). Open Marxism, rooted in open categories of value theory, is able to engage with intersectional forms of oppression epistemologically A crucial moment in this is being able to discuss alternative, intersectional perspectives outside the frame of liberal equalities, or the idea of equality of opportunity, which in turn denies the ways in which those opportunities are structured and reproduced for-value (Ahmed 2012, 2017). This challenges the epistemological blindness of coloniality reproduced in concepts that emerge from the global North, and instead legitimises a range of subjectivities (Canaan 2017).

It is here that survival-pending-revolution becomes a form of radical practice where academics are able to hear how estrangement from self, the labour process and the products of the labour emerges differentially across the social terrain. This contains the potential for a more radical conception of autonomy and radical subjectivity, pivoting around perceptions of the value of non-dominant voices in public debate. This includes intersectional narratives about: the normalisation of student identity; pedagogical and epistemological enclosure through the validation of specific forms of content and technologies; risk-based approaches to learning and teaching; the imposition of performance management; the lack of care for the body and psychology of specific groups; the lack of support for carers; and, commodification, financialisation and marketisation. As an outcome of the subsumption of HE, this reshapes those who are situated outside hegemonic identity traits (Steinþórsdóttir et al. 2017), in terms of their relationship to ideas of 'good' research and teaching excellence, academic impact, and efficiency (Heijstra et al. 2017). One potential for movement away from these logics is through an alternative focus upon values elicited through negotiation across communities, as radical or militant intercommunalism, in order to imagine a different form of social production and reproduction.

7.3 Care and Solidarity in Academic Life

As hegemony and value seek to re-purpose identity, there is a tendency to apply a risk-based approach to relationships, which increasingly makes those relationships untenable on a human basis. It also places into tension what it means to apply self-care, or to care for others inside the University. In this moment, hope for the future is kettled by the logic of austerity governance as a semi-permanent state of exception that instils insecurity on a personal and social basis. This is especially important inside organisations that rely on collective overwork as a form of self-harm, in order to generate surplus.

A strand connecting protests and occupations in Athens, Dhaka, Oakland, Québec, Santiago, Taveta and Wundanyi in Kenya, University of California Berkeley, and elsewhere in the decade since the long depression began, is students working with staff to push the limitations of a commodified educational experience. This includes attempts to recalibrate occupied spaces to enable emotional and psycho-social issues to be legitimised on the basis of shared values of mutual respect, tolerance and solidarity, rooted in courage and faith in the search for justice. At its heart this points towards the impossibility of life governed by exchange-value, and the need instead to focus upon care, which has a long history of development in radical, collective organising (Motta 2017). Moreover, such histories are rooted in social alliances between movements and families, through the collective provision of childcare, breakfast clubs, community programmes, and so on, which enable parents and especially mothers to undertake racial and economic justice work (Bedford 2008).

Care uncovers what is legitimate, and reveals what individuals are collectively willing to bear in the name of an interconnected, intersectional and intercommunal set of causes. Recent global strikes against an assault on labour rights, for instance in Kenya, the UK and USA, focused upon imposed alterations to pensions and employment rights, have reiterated a focus upon care for the shared experiences of academics, professional services staff and students. A critical step lies in enabling those experiences to be recognised as explicit threats from capital against academic labour-power. This is a recognition of present and future harm, where deferred

wages in the form of pensions are under attack in the same way that precarious employment and indentured study threaten early career academics and student livelihoods, and that performance management governs everyone. Whilst this is an emergent process of intergenerational care demonstrated across academic communities, it by no means offers a totalising counter-hegemonic position. However, it offers what Thompson (2013) saw in student protests in the 1970s against the corporate university, namely a glimpse of redemption beyond economic growth where those students 'reasserted the idea of a university.'

7.3.1 Care in the Removal of Labour-Power

The removal of labour-power, in order to deny capital time for its valorisation and reproduction, alongside student occupations that use the control of space for the same ends, serves as a reminder of the value of solidarity and mutuality. This includes an understanding of who is legitimated and marginalised through the deployment of their academic labour-power, and why control is wielded in specific ways inside the University. Control is encased in the reproductive power of the wage. As wages for academic labour-power are paid out of the portion of social capital which is invested in education and sectors related to its reinvestment, and because it is generally regarded as unproductive labour financed out of existing surplus-value, its value or status comes under threat.

As academic labour is re-engineered around productivity, this increases the risk to certain, precarious bodies and groups. For instance, policy responses to a crisis of mental health prioritise narratives of employability and entrepreneurship through resilience (UniversitiesUK 2017). In a society that prioritises surplus-value over humane values, solidarity actions in the corporate University must ask *who is to be cared about?* They must situate responses against the University as it is reproduced inside a broader, global set of relationships and political contexts that both enable and disable, based on fetishised status and production. This also demands solidarity with academics working in precarious circumstances, from tenured academics working to open-out the relationship between fetishised academia and society, through militant work in pub-

lic. Our responses are emblematic of how we attempt to take collective care of ourselves as radical and militant action against the system's demands that we identify and quantify ourselves, or become productive (hooks 1994; Lorde 1988).

Quantification stitches academic self-care into the reproduction of labour-power as a means to generate surpluses. Policy frameworks increasingly situate staff as deliverers of student mental health support, with this made abstract through data on retention and student satisfaction, embedded into staff performance. The risks here ignore the wider, structural issues that underlie poor mental health, and the disproportionate impacts of emotional labour on women and academics of colour. Moreover, they reinforce a specific focus on dominant forms of ambition, competition and personal performance. Whilst responsibility for student well-being becomes one potential metric, it is in tension with the responsibility on academics to impose work on students and other members of staff. It also reinforces obligations on academics to subordinate the bodies of individual students, such that they can perform through attendance and assessment, in exactly the same way that academic bodies are subordinated through performance management. In both instances, self-care is annihilated by self-harm both of the subjugated and subjugating individual.

An alternative reading is to focus upon mutual, collective approaches that might accord with Marcuse's (1974) statement that 'post-industrial socialism will be female or it will not exist at all', and the wider argument that movements of liberation do not solely liberate those who orchestrate them, but society as a whole (Marcos 2004). Here there is a sense that by engaging with alternative narratives, those who appear to benefit from methodological whiteness or masculinity, who in reality have become estranged from their own essence as social beings, new forms of collective self-care might be possible (Federici 2012). Here the stress is on the acceptance and inclusion of complexity, rather than the complex exclusions of those who are dehumanised through practices of othering, which themselves reflect the idea that hegemonic, white masculinity is the adversary of *becoming* (Connell 1987). This is because it perpetuates and normalises specific forms of subjectivity and of fitting-in, rooted in value production that is hidden by ideas of meritocracy and inclusion, as an

ongoing process of self-estrangement and alienation (Braidotti 2011; Savigny 2014).

The wider moment of solidarity and humanity in this is to understand how the University can help society to be against force and enclosure, in order to become a space for deliberating rather than judging, and for developing an avowedly political response to the collective punishment of austerity and marketization. In taking this view, we demonstrate that the University cares very publically about a world that is socially-defined for collective ends rather than privatised of value extraction. Moving beyond this position requires that University becomes an institution that can question the construction of human relationships inside a system of capital. It also forces academics to question the skills, knowledge and capabilities required by students to be effective agents inside the crisis of value. A critical issue is how the alienated academic finds allies, solidarity, dignity, respect (which are anti-messianic in refusing fetishisation), and which have critical reflectivity in addressing white, male, hetero-normative privilege.

7.4 The Production of Fragmented Beings

The conditions for the production of academic life reinforce exploitation and domination, in particular for those made marginal in a system structured around flows between finance capital, high-technology, performance management infrastructures, commodity-driven information work, and proletarianised menial or service labour. Where the University is produced and performed on a global terrain, for instance where institutional projects are funded through international bond markets, and where the implementation of those projects is rooted in a separate set of international technology firms that is integrated with local, precarious employment structures, the possibilities for class-based struggle and resistance are weakened (McGettigan 2013, 2015). Here, fractured identities reinforced through fetishised projections like that of student-as-consumer, enable flows of power and 'new forms of financial expropriation targeting the most vulnerable members of the class' (Dyer-Witheford 2015, p. 98). Crucially, these ways of reproducing institutions as associations of capitals also reproduces the management of labour on a molecular level

through an elaborate structure of project management that projects performativity throughout the organisation (*ibid.*, p. 140). Thus, these elaborate structures reinforce super-exploitation at the level of the team and the self, such that any inability to perform against risk-based norms will be disciplined.

Here the global nature of HE is important in extending and normalising capital's cultural reach, so that productive employment can be found for surplus-value (Marx and Engels 2002). As a result, academic communities collude, or are coerced into collusion through competition, with capital's desire to align identity and essence with the material conditions of production (Marx and Engels 1998). Thus, the academic reinforces the realities of bourgeois society through which the *true community [Gemeinswesen]* is not that of humans but of alien commodity-production and the appropriation of alien surplus labour (*ibid.*). These realities are amplified because the productivity of academic labour increases by putting to work more means of production per capita across the economy, and this tends to cheapen those means of production. However, rather than seeing social solidarity in this process of social co-operation, 'this general connection of social labour presents itself as something completely alien to the workers, something that simply concerns the capitalist' (*ibid.*, p. 179). As a result there is an immanence between the generation of surplus through academic labour and the proletarianisation of work in sectors that supply raw materials, technologies, services and so on to enable that academic labour.

Through credit-fuelled production that is grounded in extreme forms of mobile capital, *both* modes *and* locations of production become precarious and easily exploited, and this differentially affects those on the margins of production (Marx 1991, p. 572). This also affects those individuals and institutions whom credit and finance capital attempt to colonise through speculative loans or bonds (McGettigan 2013; Newfield 2016). The inability of academic labourers to question this reinforces established divisions of labour and maintains estrangement between workers in the University, be they students, professional service staff or academics. These workers are confronted ideologically and concretely with a material process of production over which they have no control (Marx 1991).

As Marx (*ibid.*, p. 482) identifies, this 'mutilates the worker, turning [her] into a fragment of [herself].' Thus, where valorisation depends upon processes of proletarianisation and fragmentation of individual capacities and capabilities, this impacts individual identities and beings. This means that modes of becoming and self-actualisation can only reflect fragmentation, or be fetishised as a means of self-identification in order to survive. The experiences of those made marginal inside the system are fundamental to an understanding of individual fragmentation. Not only is the worker impoverished in her individual, productive power, but she is denied her humanity through the partial nature of her identity. This is a function of a systemic process of the reassembly of labour, finance and technology, in order to drive profit (Deleuze and Guattari 1983), through the extraction of 'machinic surplus value' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 458). Marx (1991) thereby argues that these processes, rooted in accumulation, multiply the proletariat in a fragmented form through reproduction and reincorporation of enslaved labour-power. A moment of potential overcoming exists where those fragments of global labour previously inoculated from proletarianisation, such as academics, are confronted with the assault on living standards and labour rights traditionally faced by those on the margins. Of course, there also exists in this moment a potential for further othering of those made marginal, in order to maintain what remains of privilege.

The production of academia and academic practices at the level of society represent a way of separating and normalising specific identities, in order to know and alter those identities through comparison (Foucault 1975). Specific practices, discourses, organisational structures and technologies enable governance to be optimised, and in turn academic labour is able to condition students and their families through debt, which binds students to capital through future wage labour and the promise of independence. Folding families or carers into this model enables capital to situate its own reproduction against the social reproduction and survival of specific social units, facilitated through academic labour that is alienated from the ramifications of its work and unable to struggle against estrangement from self. This forces us to reflect upon Marx's (1974) argument that existence is a social activity through which an individual makes herself for society, in ways that reinforce her con-

scious social existence. Through debt, this social activity is abstracted as a particular form of community and general consciousness, which is enclosed and that forecloses possible futures.

However, recognising that this social activity might be reimagined offers an alternative, theoretical existence. For Marx (*ibid.*, pp. 92–3), this means recognising that the 'individual *is the social being*', whose production in association with others is 'an expression and confirmation of *social life*… individual and species-life are not *different*'. Thus, liberation emerges not from the privileging of specific positions as a form of psychological introjection or a defence against loss of status. Rather it emerges from a re-imagination of individual life as a species-being, such that essential personal powers and individual natures, in terms of activity, wealth and affects, become social powers that are not separated from her or fetishised by her (Marx 1974). As a result, the abstract, social individual is not a stranger to her, standing over her in judgement. It is instead dissolved into her essence at the level of her practice as a militant, collective act.

7.5 Struggles Against Identification

Life in academia promises a deep set of social relationships and interconnections. The University dissolved into public networks that are governed and regulated collectively offers ways of reimagining and opening out social life. Through austerity politics and the crisis of value these possibilities of re-imagination are impossible and enclosure or foreclosure are all that remains. These realities reinforce social metabolic control rooted in value-production, which disables public engagement beyond the market. As a result, alienated academic labour becomes a site of contestation, in: the desire to make it productive; policy pronouncements that push overwork and intensity; managerial discourses of efficiency, impact and excellence; in emphasising the separation between students and staff, or between professors and the precariat; and in divorcing disciplines, to create new forms of privilege.

How is it possible to move beyond separation, divorce, false binaries, and social estrangement, in order to define an alternative form of social

metabolic control? Lordon (2014, p. 140) describes how this is rooted in the emergence of indignation as a motive force, enabling a movement or new affective vector. Indignation overwhelms the desire to respect institutional norms, and instead points towards sedition. One recent moment of indignation has occurred in UK HE in the universities superannuation scheme (USS) pension strike in 2018, with a rediscovery of solidarity between staff grades and students, realised in radical education through teach-outs and in threats by alumni to withhold support for institutions docking pay for action short of a strike. This movement of indignation is a complex struggle. It intersects with issues of state securitisation, in the treatment of those students on Tier 4 visas for whom not crossing the picket line might risk deportation because of institutional attendance monitoring. It intersects with the risks to precariously-employed staff who feel unable to take action. It is criticised by management and politicians who claim that lost contact hours with students must be made up. It also lacks the engagement of a majority of staff and students. Yet, it is rooted in a rich history of student protest that includes significant unrest in the immediate aftermath of the imposition of austerity governance from 2008 (Myers 2017).

Such movements shine a light on the subsumption of academic labour. They demonstrate how issues of casualisation, securitisation, performance management, the annihilation of academic autonomy, debt, excessive executive pay, and an attrition on labour rights, are deeply interconnected. As the front line in the struggle over academic alienation, they offer solidarity with other groups and collectives who are *both* indignant at being punished in the crisis of value, *and* looking for alternatives. This enables us to rethink the engagement of academic labourers across a wider social terrain, for instance by taking activist positions in relation to eco-socialism and ecological justice that have led to protests over the Keystone XL pipeline or a more radical engagement with the outcomes of the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It is also witnessed in academic activism at the level of healthcare, social welfare, access to natural resources, gendered and racialised violence and so on. At issue now is how to connect these collective, societal cracks through a war of position that seeks to define an alternative cultural terrain.

This new terrain reimagines civil society inside liberal democracy through a radical reassessment of labour that denies privilege and prejudice through the maintenance of status. In part this might be achieved through a reintegration of philosophy with science and technology, such that they cease to function as instruments of class hegemony, and instead become a popular force, designed to enable intellectual activity at the level of society. However, in these movements of indignation and struggles for new terrains, we also come back to the gendered, racialised and classed intersections of autonomy that are amplified intergenerationally. We might ask, how is it possible to be radical when the structures of political society and institutions of civil society enforce domestication upon us? How are we able to refuse the movement of the academic commodity as a movement of the denial of human subjectivity? These issues form a critique of the capitalist University and of the ongoing alienation of academic labour. In engaging with these questions we struggle against capital as a struggle against being identified for-value and against the workplace.

This is not the struggle for an alternative identity. As Holloway (2003) states, it is the struggle against identity. However, it is also a struggle that respects the dignity of multiple, intersectional, exploited positions with which capital is at war. It is in that moment of enacting war through value against human values, that capital fractures identity to create 'the material elements [of] the development of the rich individuality … the full development of activity itself' (Marx and Engels 1998, p. 325). In a moment of crisis, in facing down its barriers, capital reinvents social productive forces. At the same time it creates the possibility that we might widen the realm of autonomy or freedom, by opening-up the potential for disengaging labour from the production of everyday necessities. This would enable the development of rich individuality, as an all-sided way of producing life. Such human richness describes an alternative form of wealth, rooted in the skills, knowledge, capabilities, hopes, loves, fears of the individual, who is not abstractly defined by value. This is the overcoming and abolition of the capital relation, which is imminent to the overcoming and abolition of its mediations. The recognition of the potential for human richness is shaped through co-operative production

by associated, free producers (Marx 1970). It is a reclaiming of productive activity as distinctly human or spiritual, and more importantly as self-mediated in a way that elevates self-consciousness (Hegel 1963; Sayers 2007). Central to this process of self-mediation is a recognition of dignity in the production of social relations.

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Part III

A Terrain for Overcoming Alienation

8

Indignation

8.1 Struggles

Indignation is immanent to the denial of dignity in the capitalist university. It emerges inside the academic who has lost control over her labour as it becomes performance, and who has, as a result, become estranged from her soul. It is an indicator of struggle at the level of the psyche that is played out in overwork, embodied illness, anxiety and depression. It is an indicator of struggle as the psyche attempts to make sense of the commodification of labour, in its material, cognitive and emotional forms. For Holloway (1995) this psychological struggle is crucial in developing a negative theory of society that accepts and amplifies the *scream* of experience. The search is to open-out the categories of struggle, such that praxis can be seen as an opening-out of subjectivity. Thus, we start with our own subjectivity, or lack thereof, in order to situate struggle through narratives of indignation, which themselves explode from exploitation (Tronti 1979). This opening-out of struggle is a description of the logics that maintain power-over academic labour. Our struggle is then to describe our individual exploitations, and to listen to the exploited narratives of others, so that we can theorise our experiences in terms of alienation and in the name of solidarity. When voiced, these narratives form

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ruptures that potentially act as brakes on the machine of capital (Holloway 2010).

Marx (1974) enables us to frame these narratives around the interrelationships between alienated labour and conscious life activity. Distilled through Holloway's work (1995, 2003, 2010) this pushes us to describe, analyse and theorise our lives as vectors of struggle framed by abstract labour and our abstracted essence. This is a struggle against labour and for dignity, and it leads Holloway (2010, p. 919) to question whether it is possible to work through the University, in order to 'stop the reproduction of this self-destructive society, capitalism?' Our struggle as academics is not for a better capitalist university. Rather it is a movement of indignation against the reproduction of the capitalist university through abstract, alienated academic labour. Beyond this, it connects this movement to other social flows of indignation against processes that silence and make invisible (Motta 2017).

8.1.1 Technology and Time

Working time continues to expand as capital seeks to valorise activity, such that a reduction of working hours is seen as a sin and antithetical to the ethic of performance. However, there is a strand of Marxist thought that situates struggle against labour as a struggle against capitalist time, pivoting around the use of technology to manage the production of the necessities for human existence, and thereby limiting Marx's (1991) realm of necessity. Immanent to this is the abolition of socially-necessary labour time in mediating valuable activity, and a widening of the time for autonomous activity (Dunayevskaya 1978; Gorz 1982), in Marx's (1991) realm of freedom. This is why so many struggles embrace a shortening of the working day as a movement against the impoverished mediation of activity by abstract time, and instead pointing towards wealth or human richness (Holloway 2003; Wendling 2009), through self-mediated activity facilitated by the open availability of productive forces (Marx and Engels 1998).

For Marx (1993, p. 707) time is a crucial moment of psychological as well as material struggle, precisely because of capital's schizophrenic

relationship to it. It is constantly trying to create disposable time by rationalising labour and reducing the friction of circulation, whilst at the same moment it is desperate to find time for valorisation and the creation of surplus labour. Marx (*ibid.*) is clear that increases in disposable time are connected to surplus production, which interrupts necessary labour and the realisation of surplus labour. Here, the development of the forces of production potentially ruptures the production of value and the appropriation of alien labour. The collapse in production based on exchange-value then denies the logic and legitimacy of the existing relations of production, such that it becomes possible for associated workers to appropriate their own surplus labour. One outcome of this is that disposable time, the realm of freedom and autonomy, will grow for all because 'necessary labour time will be measured by the needs of the social individual' (*ibid.*), rather than through abstract, alienated labour time as human degradation.

The struggle for the social individual encourages the academic to confront her status, in order to contribute to the development of social infrastructures that reduce or mechanise the realm of necessity. *Pace* Marx (2004, p. 447) this work requires that the academic embeds herself inside new terrains of co-operative practices, such that 'the fetters of [her] individuality' can be shed and the capabilities of the species developed. However, this work must be rooted in the reclaiming of the activities and means of production of the various labours of society, beyond the market. It cannot reinforce status, privilege and domination. It must be rooted in self-mediation if the struggle is for dignity as a new form of wealth (*ibid.*, pp. 449–50). There are a set of tensions in this movement for dignity. For some, this struggle must be accelerationist, in order to mature the material, objective conditions of production, and therefore to amplify the antagonisms over time that exist in capital (Marx 2004, p. 635). This narrative is threatened by capital's machinic offensive that is aimed at decomposing counter-hegemonic positions (Deleuze and Guattari 1983).

The academic bears witness to this accelerationist struggle through the digitisation of academic services that support knowledge transfer and exchange, public engagement, open data, virtual learning, student advice and welfare. Digitisation is stressful because it disciplines the academic through competition as a result of: machine learning that supports

personalisation and problem-based learning; real-time performance data; the deployment of dead labour embedded in multimedia; digitised learning objects; the transfer of assessment and feedback practices on-line. Technology is inserted as a mediator between institution, academic and student, which catalyses proletarianisation via an attrition on the commodity and leverage skills of academics. These have accelerated as capital incorporates the processing power of digital technology into valorisation, to overcome the political composition of struggles, by making variable capital precarious or redundant (Tronti 2012). For some academics threatened in this way, occupying a defensive mode (focused on the student experience) reinforces a belief that they do not have the time to act, dissent, or focus their energies on alternatives. In this way it can be difficult or unthinkable to consider how to *revoke* time from the system, in order to create new time with this rich resource. Yet this is what liberation from capitalist time requires.

8.1.2 Campus Struggles

Is it possible for academics to engage actively in a circulation of struggles (Theorie Communiste 2009), or in a cascade of struggles that embrace the segmented composition of the global, working class (Dyer-Witheford 2015)? This demands that academics are open to understanding the needs and demands of those who are made marginal, excluded, or othered. This is not to subsume specific, intersectional struggles under an alternative form of power or an alienating counter-hegemony. Instead, it points towards a cascade of social strikes as a vector of resistance that gives voice. Classroom struggles against the proletarianisation of academic labour also offers an opening out of conversations that seek to decolonise the classroom, in terms of how education acts as a vector through which hegemony can be imposed upon bodies and minds. Thus, forms of academic decolonisation are indignant struggles 'against-and-beyond capital' (Harvie 2008, p. 232).

This existence against-and-beyond transgresses the borders of classroom identity, through critical and democratic pedagogy (Amsler 2015; hooks 1994; McLaren 2011), and through the recomposition of

revolutionary, pedagogic praxis such as student-as-producer (Neary 2011; Neary and Winn 2009). These transgressions undermine the power relations of capital: by reimagining the organising principles of the curriculum as a form of general assembly; by refusing the imposition of hegemonic narratives and knowledge inside the curriculum as a refusal of the methodological classroom (BAU 2017); by militant, co-research imagined in public (Thorburn 2012). Being against-and-beyond transgresses the borders of classroom practice, *either* by taking academic work into the community, *or* by undercommoning the University through collective refusals of prescribed pedagogies or curricula, the open sharing of resources, plagiarism and cheating (Moten and Harney 2013). Transgression also exists in moments of solidarity between teaching and student unions, for instance in the open educational movements that wrap themselves around strike action, like teach-outs. This is a mutual recognition of connected narratives of exploitation, which is especially intimate during strike action where bodies are placed on the line of refusal.

Intimacy has the potential to generate new methodological approaches rooted in solidarity action research and horizontal, movement-oriented modes of co-production for resistance (Autonomous Geographies 2010). Militant, collective research transgresses the fetishised and false boundaries between academia and society, or between academic and object of study. This transgression enables the University to lose its fetishised status and instead become a laboratory for a workers' enquiry of academic alienation, which might then flow across the boundaries between academic labour and the labour of the social factory. Such enquiries are rooted in making visible concrete stories that can be theorised, in order to generate new forms of struggle, new theory and new actions. This is echoed in demands for a decolonisation of the University through a process of dismantling it, so that academics can see beyond its logics of enclosure.

Thus, spaces and temporalities for solidarity actions, as new forms of indignant co-production against the methodological University, must disrupt the circulation of activity, surplus and privilege that reproduce the University as a node in capitalist reproduction. Disruption might emerge from: ongoing action short of a strike, which reduces the availability of surplus academic labour; critical, open discussions about the use and

value of academic time, and about academic surplus-value; and, refusals to contribute to metrics-based frameworks rooted in excellence, satisfaction and impact, which reinforce alienated futures. This is a movement to widen the horizon of possibility in the face of aggressive abstraction through competition.

The horizon of possibility opens out through mutual recognition rooted in dignity. This is fundamental to the amplification of scholarly support for activist movements witnessed in:

- protests rooted in a locality, like the Maagdenhuis in Amsterdam in 2015;
- struggles against issues like sexual exploitation on campus, or against cops on campus;
- solidarity struggles for academic labour rights for instance in strikes in Kenya, Nigeria and the UK;
- temporal projects like the Really Open University in Leeds, UK or the global Occupy movement;
- informal transnational collectivities like the EduFactory Collective, Rhodes Must Fall, or Tent City University in London; and
- co-operative projects, like The Social Science Centre in Lincoln UK or Mondragon University in Spain.

These alternatives are also infused with a prefigurative politics that connects historically and materially to autonomous educational work, for example of the Brazilian Landless Worker's Movement, the Mesopotamian Social Sciences Academy in Qamislo, or the Zapatistas. Thus, whilst these movements also risk co-option by those with power-over their reproduction, they offer potential for mutual recognition rooted in dignity that stands asymmetrically against an alien, repressive regime.

The point then becomes to widen resistance on different levels, and across different terrains. This matters because the abolition of alienation and alienated labour is immanent to self-actualisation as a collective, pedagogical movement. Self-actualisation is not the accumulation of new status that can be quantified and monitored, or a widening of access to democratic, liberal, diversity agendas. It is a renewal of life as we 'develop new principles for the world out of the world's own principles' (Marx

1975, p. 398). For Clarke (1991, p. 255) our task is 'to resume the project which Marx initiated of linking an emancipatory social theory to an emancipatory social practice'. Where this can be achieved across a range of fronts, as a movement of dignity, which moves through asking, questioning and listening, it becomes possible to focus upon self-actualisation and self-mediation. This moves us beyond the seizure of state power or the means of production, to question how academic work can be dissolved into communal and co-operative life.

8.1.3 Campus Struggles and the Social Strike

Students have been central to movements of resistance against the imposition of the market as the sole mediator of life, and these movements have sought to stitch together a wider front of protest. Thus, students rather than staff have gone into occupation of buildings and subsequently felt the violence of the state, and they have been central to discussions around the generation of co-operative alternatives. The democratic work of radical students in overcoming their estrangement from staff by the abolition of status, emerges from the desire to create new scholarly communities at the level of society. This is a struggle to liberate the process of *becoming*, and individualise subjectivity. Moreover, it is a lived struggle, which points not only to the liberation of students from debt or an enclosed future, but also to wider possibilities for social justice (perhaps beginning from families, carers and staff), and the liberation of others from exploitation as a broad, collective movement of resistance (Rolling Jubilee 2018).

This gives common ground to both labour and social struggles beyond national levels of action (The Transnational Social Strike Platform 2015), and which also traverse the boundaries between social and private that are equally subject to immiseration (Del Re 2015). Capital seeks to violate boundaries, and one response to this generalised proletarianisation has been a call for the social strike, as a means of generating alternative political actions rooted in solidarity (Milburn 2015). Such actions work across modes of production to connect society and the factory through praxis directed against oppressive, exploitative social conditions.

Indignation enables us to ask to ask how we might 'organize vulnerability and turn it into political action' (Del Re 2015) on a scale large enough to enable new relations of social reproduction. Such a reimagining would focus upon social metabolic control rooted in equality between different human bodies, rather than between data flows. Such a reimagining has to find spaces to flourish inside the University, but increasingly it has to hear and propagate those alternatives that emerge beyond, in social centres or on the Commons, or in responses to austerity. As Milburn (2015) argues, this involves 'directly socialising, collectivising and communising our social relations, reproduction and struggles'. Striking at the level of society amplifies intersectional resistance across multiple, complex terrains and spaces. This offers a means of refusing the structural adjustment of everyday life by abstract labour. Instead, we ask 'how can we build non-coercive, non-oppressive, non-hierarchical and non-exploitative relationships and institutions *today* that would be worthy examples of the world we want to create?' (Haiven and Khasnabish 2014, p. 248).

Working to situate the restructuring of HE against broader directional demands is one means of pushing-back against the ideas of teaching intensification and of academic labour as human capital. Such moments of solidarity highlight how so much of social (and therefore academic) reproduction is predicated on: voluntary, unwaged labour, such as the social reproduction of the home that reproduces the academic labourer, or by precariously employed labour; and, an excess of surplus labour poured into institutions and which remains invisible in the face of fixed workload allocations (Viewforth Consulting 2018). The struggle is to make visible the alienation that emerges from this toxic, hidden reproduction, and how it encourages estrangement between academics, professional service staff and students, as they compete for time. This can then be taken into the community through families, carers and friends. At issue is how to observe the dignity of academic life, in order to connect into the dignity of life in the social factory, as '[a] constitutive heterogeneity of the exploited and expropriated populations of the world', which recognises 'the self-organization and composition of differences and particularly of different strategies of life and survival' (Hansen 2015). As Marx (1866) argued, this implies academic labour aiding 'every social

and political movement tending in that [same] direction', in order to overcome its own alienation through self-abolition at the level of society (Hall 2014).

8.2 Dignity

Mészáros (2010) argues that a society of substantive equality must be based on self-mediation that grows through self-critique, and the manifestation of a new, communal self-organisation of productive relations. This is also the integration of private and public in ways that resist enclosure, objectification and alienation. The point of access for such an integration is the revelation of capital's exploitative, alienated sociability, and the development of relationships that enable survival pending revolution, as a departure point for a new unity between workers, society and the conditions of production. These must be defined democratically and collectively. Strengthening the connective tissue between prefigurative experiments offers a way of opening out a movement or convocation of the radical imagination against the indignity of exploitation (Haiven and Khasnabish 2014).

Specific struggles for change and radical experiment enable us to question if it is possible to rupture alienated labour in the University, or whether a focus upon dignity in overcoming alienation and estrangement from production, society and the self is impossible from inside institutions. These struggles have a rich recent history in staff and student antagonisms against the indignity of the imposition of austerity governance, and in attempting to imagine a world beyond capitalism. Thus, collectivities like *After the Fall* (2009) and Edufactory (Thorburn 2012), and movements for undercommoning the university (Moten and Harney 2013) point towards alternative ways of conceptualising the crisis of social reproduction, in order to reproduce alternative forms of educational society beyond the University. There is potential for connecting these movements into those for decolonisation and liberation from exploitation, like Rhodes Must Fall (2018). As wider movements seeking to transform social reproduction, and which also operate as caravans that travel temporally and spatially generating new understandings,

there is potential here for a process of producing and circulating dignity rooted in a shared appreciation of a heterodox political content that decommodifies identity.

New forms of sociality that are grounded in social wealth and the 'rich human being' and 'rich human need' express a totality of life-activities, the realisation of which exists as an inner necessity, through need as it is self-defined (Marx 1974). The aim is to transform negative critique of alienated society into new forms of positive transcendence, beyond the mediation of institutions like the University, alongside the market and the commodity, as interwoven political command structures. Such a transformation is one of social metabolic control, such that the production of society moves against-and-beyond value to humane values. Dignity then emerges from a refusal of the labour theory of value as a theory of subordination enacted through social estrangement and the imposition of privilege and power as a means to produce, circulate and accumulate value.

As Holloway (2003) stresses, this is not the conquest of power, which internalises dominance and exploitation, and risks ongoing, intersectional oppression. Intellectual practices are critical here precisely because capital depends for its existence on the denial of dignity, whilst it stresses that dignity can only arise from full engagement in commodity-producing society. This demands a negative critique against capital's imperative that we internalise its subjectivity as our existence, whilst its existence denies our subjectivity. Attempting to make sense of this requires huge amounts of cognitive dissonance and psychological trauma, and moreover it tends towards self-repression in the name of value. This shapes the work of academic and student protests and occupations, which stand against the system's promises and its impoverishing reality. These actions form ruptures that reveal the depth of our alienation. Moving beyond this demands intellectual practices that can recombine the disciplines, and reconnect theory with practice and fieldwork. It is fundamental that this is done at the level of society, such that the fetishism that is incubated inside universities and reproduced through academic labour can be confronted by a social theory of revolution.

It is here that a succession of intellectual explorations at the level of society become fundamental in forcing us to reconsider our humanity. It

is only through the movement of indignation for humanity and humane values that the abusive law of value might be refused. Holloway (2003) is clear that this process of anti-fetishism must engage with the dignity of self-mediation, if we are not to outsource our hopes for a better capitalism to heroic parties or the heroic leader. Bloch (1986) sees this as a coming-to-oneself, and as a moment of revealing alienation, such that we can uncover the psychological antagonism in the ongoing, everyday separation of subject and object in our lives. One moment of hope lies in the reality that in uncovering this separation we are able (as intercommunal workers across the social factory) to make concrete how fetishised social relations between things objectify us. Revealing this ongoing psychological rupture is a form of negative dialectics (Adorno 1966; Bonefeld 2014, 2016), which offers opportunities for opening-out intersectional narratives of the rate of exploitation (Ciccariello-Maher 2017), as an 'absolute movement of becoming' (Marx 1993, p. 488).

8.2.1 The Movement of Struggle for Dignity

Academic activists working in the global South, or in indigenous or marginalised communities in the global North continue to argue that differential modes and experiences of exploitation point self-mediation towards decolonising praxis (Ciccariello-Maher 2017). Such praxis is a demand for dignity for the non-subjects of coloniality, through a process that exceeds 'the epistemological logics that structure and reproduce coloniality' (Motta 2017, p. 185). Here, subjectivity is defined in relation to the self and collective, and is a struggle of becoming and being. As Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 243) argues, 'coloniality' is sustained in in academic content, performance, culture common sense and self-and community-images.

Working for a world beyond coloniality, networks of feminist communities, such as the Escuelta in Cali, Colombia, and the FISH collective in the Hunter Valley, Australia, describe nonviolent, feminist work for a post-patriarchal, emancipatory society (Motta 2017). Here, education is dissolved into the collective as a form of praxis focused upon voice, visibility and agency, in generating solutions to issues of ongoing emergencies like child removal, political silencing and access to services. As a result,

'knowledge is practised as a verb as opposed to a noun' (*ibid.*, p. 188), as a movement of dignity rooted in affirmative dialogical praxis that sits against enclosure and commodification. In this way it seeks to create a new politics of knowledge from the perspective of individuals who have been othered through their gender, imposed and colonised status, race and sexuality (Lugones 2010). Collective pedagogic practices of making visible, challenging and transforming injustice, through narrating and listening are central (Canaan 2017).

This idea of voice and starting from where we find ourselves does not define struggles for utopia, it defines struggles for dignity against capital. It is a reflection of the Zapatista claim that *preguntando caminamos*, or *asking we walk* (Marcos 2004), through which it is possible to question the relationship between individual and society and individual and material production. In questioning and revisiting we are able to move towards 'our true heart' (Marcos 2004, pp. 268–70). This situates cognition immanent to emotion and the soul, and immanent to the movement of collective lives, such that the struggle for movement delineates life as pedagogic practice. As a result the distinctions between teacher and student our overcome, so that each 'could teach how the world was born and show where it is to be found' (*ibid.*, pp. 274–77). This stands in opposition to commodified, risk-based approaches to trust, and represents dignity as a process of emergence and self-mediation, which ruptures and is recomposed inside us as we question ourselves in the world.

This dynamism in questioning refuses the paralysis that emerges from our inability to define the communist future beyond alienated labour. Marx (1993, p. 159) was explicit about this in stating that the 'material conditions and relations prerequisite for a classless society [are] concealed in society as it is.' Our struggle as academics is therefore to contribute to the full development of the productive forces and relations of production, as a process of praxis that enables society to reimagine those forces and relations. As a result, this rejects the neoliberal conceit of commodified lives, which can articulate the future in a predetermined or preformed and naturalistic state. Thus, *asking we walk* starts with collective humanity as a force of rupture, and of human richness. It allows us to refuse: first, what seems inevitable and naturalistic; second, the fetishism of capitalist social relations; and, third, the recomposition of our lives into

capital. We move by asking questions that challenge our estranged identities, in relation to oppression > money > value > commodity > labour-power > alienated labour. Movement must rise up from inside us, and start from where we are, in order that we can ask, *what is this surfacing?* as a struggle for 'auto-determination' (Negri 1991, p. 162), beyond colonisation and ongoing oppression.

In this process, the academic role is to model public intellectual activity (Neary 2017) and in supporting the struggle to enable movement. Yet they have an equally important role in checking their privilege and status, in order that it might be abolished at the level of society. If a counter-movement is to emerge that is trans-sectoral and transnational in classical, class-terms, it also needs to pivot around intersectional struggles. This drags the academic into struggles against the ongoing alienation of the self from a meaningful life, which is reinforced through transnational, mobile forces of capital seeking to maximise exploitation, in order to generate value. The struggle for the academic is then, how to contribute to the development of a different consciousness, alongside antagonism towards exploitation across a wide terrain, without imposing theoretical or methodological closure upon those already made marginal (BAU 2017; Bhambra 2017).

8.2.2 Dignity Against Property

The movement of dignity is a movement against property and against its alien objectivity, which is the imposition of enclosure and command emerging from alienated labour. It is also a movement against the alien subjectivity represented by capital. Capital reproduces itself as subject in the moment that it enforces its claims over our objectified labour. This is a starting point for an absolute movement of becoming (Marx 1993), which is enabled when the worker can see her labour as alienated and as rooted in the enforced sale of her labour-power and the commodification of the products of her labour. This is her ability to move in solidarity against her labour as a lifelong sentence of estrangement that emerges from alienated property, under conditions that are never hers to define. Thus, the individual is a living, breathing, loving individual is always

confronted with material powers and means of production for everyday life that are blockages against human richness. These are fences (Canaan 2017) or walls (Ahmed 2017) that are easier to navigate for some people, but which represent systemic, diverse techniques for maintaining hegemonic social metabolic control. This is why the movement of becoming, as a movement against property, is a movement against capital and the intersectional oppressions that maintain it as a structure of domination.

A movement against property, including academic commodities as the property of the University rather than of society, is fundamental in demonstrating and enabling positive transcendence. Instead, this is a movement for intellectual wealth based upon the richness of relationships, precisely because dignity emerges from those relationships and as a result it offers the potential for liberation and 'all-sided production of the whole earth' (Marx and Engels 1998, p. 59). Marx and Engels situate individual dignity as a mode of liberation through association, rooted in qualities of love: courage, fidelity, restraint, generosity, tolerance, and forgiveness. Without the ability to see the world through these qualities, we are reduced to struggles to maintain human capital or competitive edge, which deny us the possibility 'to find an alternative value-form that will work in terms of the social reproduction of society in a different image' (Harvey 2010, p. 46). Our struggle for dignity against property is therefore a struggle for humane values against the inhumane universe of value.

Academic practice is a crucial site of struggle because under capitalism it teaches that a positive life can only be achieved through the commodity form. It reinforces this through human capital development, which conceals estrangement and alienation under tropes of social mobility, entrepreneurialism, employability, excellence and impact. It conceals how these fetishised logics of social reproduction reproduce private property as a negation of life (Dunayevskaya 1978). Thus, rather than reproducing ideologies for alienation, academic practice needs to be communised as the negation of private property (Marx 1974). This is not simply Hegel's movement against unfreedom as contradicted or alienated freedom that can be liberated inside existing society (Gunn and Wilding 2012; Hegel 1976). Rather, it is an active conception of self-emancipation that remains impossible inside the structuring realities of that existing society. The movement of self-emancipation is not a crossing of borders between per-

sonal status or collective form of liberal democracy, such that we can individually accumulate more property. Rather it is a transgression against status and liberal democracy, and against property rooted in alienated labour. It is the liberatory movement of the living self for her own mediation.

8.2.3 Dignity Against Identity

Identity as fetishisation is a compulsion of academia: Vice-Chancellor; principal; professor; reader; tenured; and so on. Academia is a key space inside which abstract identity, as a mark of human capital, denies dignity because it denies human wealth and instead posits value as the alpha and omega of existence. However, by refusing abstract identity as fetish or process of fetishisation, and in revealing the ways in which individuals are exploited and oppressed along intersectional vectors, it becomes possible to generate ruptures that are rooted in open categories of identity. Here, the stress is on the anti-identification of abstracted life, in order to abolish quantifiable identity and instead to move towards associated, self-mediated individuality that becomes undeniable.

There are multiple examples of denied individuality across the terrain of academic labour, which threaten to enclose and deform the idea of motherhood (Amsler and Motta 2017), that subvert affective attachments between peers and between students and staff, and that instead instil truth inside hegemony. The struggle is for non-identity, and against subjectivity that is constituted by alienated labour (Holloway 2016), across the curriculum, public engagement, and militant and co-research. However, the struggle is also to reacquaint the academic with her environment, from which commodification estranges her through depersonalisation and dehumanisation. From here we can step towards Lorde's (1988) declaration that self-care is self-preservation, and therefore an act of political warfare. Forms of self-care are amplified through co-operation with those who have also been othered, such that self-care becomes a pedagogic project rooted in intersectional injustice and which points beyond that injustice by making the personal political. This does not begin inside institutional mindfulness or resilience workshops. It begins

with the institutional revelation of exploited identity, in order to develop a politics of anti-identity at the level of society, which then celebrates non-identity through a process of decolonisation.

A starting point inside the academy for a movement dignity has to be the critical social theory of those groups fighting for political empowerment and emancipation, for whom knowledges of resistance are central. This matters because the non-recognition of ideas is disempowering. Ideas are core to who we are and their co-option exacerbates a fractured sense of self, and of being made marginal. These concrete experiences points towards Marx's (1843) question of what kind of emancipation are we seeking? These concrete experiences points towards a struggle for dignity that is the reintegration of the heart and the head, focused on personal experience in its relation to material structures. Eventually, the hope is that this points beyond intersectional structures, to the material production of society. However, those intersectional exploitations are crucial in uncovering the weight of culture, history, experience and materiality in ongoing rejections and aggressions, and the University in its dependence on alienated labour is as good a place to start as any. At issue is whether there is a radical, democratic approach that might enable academics to redefine forms of subjectivity at the level of society.

8.3 Revolutionary Pedagogy as Revolutionary Practice

The struggle for dignity is the struggle for a new form of revolutionary pedagogy at the level of society. This is the dissolution of education into the fabric of society, because critical, educational practices rooted in transformation away from the law of value and towards humane values must be everyday social practices if that transformation is to last. The continued separation of individuals and disciplines inside institutions, underwritten by performance data that then enables competition between those institutions, is fetishism that cannot resolve the conflict between humans and nature in environmental crisis, or the conflict between peers in the crisis of value. It is only at the level of society, where abstract separations have been refused or dissolved, that the return of humans to

themselves can be enabled. This is the integration of human capacity to work with the products of that work, inside a self that understands the relationship between objectification and self-confirmation, in order to define how freedom relates to necessity across the social terrain. Marx (1974, 1998) was clear that this resolution was communism, as a movement rooted in human activity of self-mediation and personal change that depends upon circumstances and upbringing, and which becomes revolutionary practice through the commitment to changing circumstances via self-education.

This position is incredibly difficult to navigate given the asymmetrical power relations between educationalists working in society and the rule of capital. How is it possible to instantiate revolutionary practice across the totality of educational practices in society? Given capital's propensity to re-purpose counterhegemonic practice for value, and to estrange humans from their subjectivities, how is it possible to develop the all-round individual as a form of co-operative wealth? (Marx 1970) and Marx and Engels (1998) were clear that overcoming must be a practical movement that responds to new relations of production, which sees the opportunities of emergent forces of production. The role of the movement is fundamental, because it points towards the potential for a flow of alternative narratives or ways of becoming. Beginning from innumerable places that have ruptured the fabric of capital, overcoming points towards solidarity actions with others who are exploited, as the beginning of solidarity ecosystems or economies.

In this process, McLaren (2011) is clear about the role of critical education as revolutionary pedagogy, which we might map across to Marx's revolutionary practice: first, in igniting ways of refusing the co-option of the general intellect, and the valorisation of knowledge, skills and capabilities, alongside subjectivity; second, in challenging the reification by capital of the intellectual commodities it has stolen; and, third, in developing a systematic pedagogical dialectic through its relation to praxis. It is only by engaging with educational processes that break the flows of capital accumulation that a general social transformation might be enacted, as a process of being and becoming rooted in alternative horizons and the non-limits of communism. These non-limits are predicated upon the renunciation of power as 'revolutionary praxis from the point of view

of the most invisible among us' (*ibid.*, p. 217). This is why informal, solidarity networks inside institutions like the undercommons, extra-institutional spaces for educational protest like Edufactory or Rhodes Must Fall, the educational wings of trades unions, or societal alternatives like the Social Science Centre, are important in amplifying the antagonism between 'total social capital and the totality of labour' (Mészáros 2015, p. 46). The key mechanisms for amplification are twofold. The first is to act as a constant reminder that academic labour and its place inside the methodological University is socially-constructed, and that it is alienated just as are other forms of labour; and second, to ensure that theory and prefigurative practice can be integrated.

8.3.1 Teaching Abolition as a New Common Sense

At the level of society, there is an imperative to live inside these solidarity ecosystems, because of the intensification of the secular crisis of capital. Mészáros (2015) argues that the stakes have greatly increased because the rationalisation of labour-power, through the absorption of the general intellect into technologies, has led to an unprecedented annihilation of jobs or impoverishment of work by scrubbing it of its intellectual content. This means that labour increasingly struggles to be integrated into a global, alienating, social metabolic control, with ramifications for domination and subordination. Thus, a primary aim for revolutionary practice rooted in revolutionary pedagogy is not simply to overthrow capital, but to abolish it as the means of regulating society. For educators this has to start in their own practice, by refusing discourses of employability, entrepreneurship, excellence, impact and satisfaction. It begins from a range of places, such as: the refusal of excellence frameworks that quantify the work of the self and on the self, and which lead to the fetishism of individual skills, knowledge and capabilities and their aggregation at the level of subjects and institutions; a constant questioning of artificially-imposed, dehumanising narratives of human capital; the decolonisation of the curriculum and its governing principles; and, solidarity actions against precarious employment. At some point then, this is the collective refusal of academics operating as members of society to reproduce discourses for wage-slavery, and in the process generating new interconnections.

For Mészáros (2005), teaching is central to this project of becoming self-mediating. The practice of teaching, and by extension of enabling anyone to teach, raises consciousness, as opposed to the alienated consciousness of commodity production, as human society. This is a positive consciousness of human nature divorced from second-order mediations, in the name of an open, associational individuality. As a result, revolutionary teaching becomes a collective struggle to analyse the form of things (Rikowski 2004; Sayers 2007), not to replace privilege but to abolish it (Gorz 1982). Such an abolition rests on reducing the demand for labour-power and labour-time to produce the absolute, objective necessities of life in the sphere of heteronomy, and a concomitant widening of the time for autonomous activity in the sphere of freedom. Thus, revolutionary teaching is the revelation of capital's unwitting production of the material conditions for communism (Marx 1991), and how to set that free through a new political and cultural apparatus that is not dependent upon capitalist institutions, like universities. The development of solidarity ecosystems that can become self-regulating over time, is crucial in enabling free production as human essence, and in supporting people through a transformation that will be experienced differentially.

Here the key is to develop education in a new sense, or as a new form of common sense. This takes education beyond the institution, in reintegrating mind and body, alongside emotion and cognition, at the level of society, as a means of subsuming the general intellect back inside ourselves as social beings. Hudis (2012) argues that it is technology and industrial development, alongside scientific knowledge, that construct and exploit the proletariat, and therefore the revolutionary potential of the proletariat is the revolutionary, practical development of technology, industrial organisation and scientific knowledge. This is the proletariat's ability to subsume the forces of production inside a new mode of production and a new set of relations of production. For Marx and Engels (1998, p. 57), this pointed towards communism as 'the real movement which abolishes the present state of things'. Inside twenty-first century capitalism subjectivity has become commodified as a form of mass intellectuality, such that forms of subjectivity are proletarianised on a generalised level. Abolishing this commodification and subsuming that objectified subjectivity at the level of the individual and society is the revolutionary, politi-

cal moment, which is rooted in reclaiming the process of producing subject knowledge, technological skills and organisational capabilities as potential modes of liberation.

This maps onto modes of militant, self-education designed to create a new form of political subjectivity through collective co-research that transgresses the boundaries between academic and society (Thorburn 2012). The critical moment for alienated academic labour, is to treat the University as context for radical research that might produce living knowledge capable of revolutionary practice at the level of society (Roggero 2011). It has no revolutionary moment beyond this position, and instead can only act for the recuperation and reproduction of the capital relation. An academic, workers' enquiry is a departure point for enabling 'the worker to develop the capabilities of his species' (Marx 2004, p. 447), which will dissolve the capitalist mode of production inside a new, non-alienated mode. Whilst this is beyond Hegel's transhistorical intention for the Spirit in its formation, one might begin to see indignation stoked by revolutionary practice as a deep interconnection with his view of a morphing social metabolic control 'dissolving bit by bit structure of its previous world' (Hegel 1963, §11).

8.3.2 Teaching the Struggle for Communism

For academics, alienation is a heuristic that shapes the movement beyond capitalism and towards communism, precisely because its revelation enables critique of the production of academic knowledge and the academic labour process, alongside self-and collective-alienation (Sayers 1998). *Pace* Postone (1993), we can argue that the purpose of revolutionary pedagogy is not to make claims for the reintegration of alienated labour-power inside the worker. Rather, its purpose is to reveal the mode through which alienation constitutes an ongoing historical process of generating labour-power as property that must be divorced from its owner, who becomes self-estranged in the process. It offers a moment in which we might point beyond value in its alienating dependence upon human productive power and knowledge, towards a new form of social, material wealth. This forges an on-going, revolutionary horizon rooted in

temporal and spatial practices that are never fixed or final, and which situate knowledge production in relation to concrete, social experience as the application of ideas (Canaan 2017; Dinerstein 2015).

The key is how to widen the realm of freedom and autonomy, through a critique of the form of labour, which produces the world, and its situation as alienated, labour-power (Clarke 1991). Clarke (1991) is clear that Marx situates private property emerging from alienated labour, and that the separation of alienated labour from the labourer is the foundation stone of title over labour. As a result, communism as the abolition of the present state of things is not simply the abolition of private property, rather it is the abolition of all second-order mediations of commodity society, such that the abolition of alienated labour is human emancipation. Moreover, it is the self-aware activity of labour that can generate an ongoing process of critique of alienated production, precisely because this is immanent to its self-activity (Sayers 2007). However, this must accept that capital is a process of colonisation, and therefore praxis needs to be redefined in terms of *both* decolonisation *and* emancipation. Revolutionary pedagogy teaches us that praxis is never finished. We move by questioning and asking, such that our desire shapes a world in which *preguntando caminamos*, asking we walk. The practice of revolutionary education is to teach how to question our indignation and to learn how to move towards dignity, as a struggle for autonomy.

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9

Autonomy

9.1 Against the Capital-Relation

A set of intersecting issues converge around academic labour rooted in our alienation from our work and its products, ourselves and each other. These issues are amplified where academic labour appears to have no language for resistance beyond tactical counter-measures. Resistance tends to collapse around single issues, like casualisation, mental health and ill-being, pensions and so on. As a result, academics risk developing a fractured sense of their own exploitation, as managers impose new workload agreements and performance management metrics, and then transfer performance risks to individuals and departments. Moreover, academics risk developing a fractured sense of how the subsumption of their work inside capitalism exacerbates exploitation across society, through: the acceptance of student debt; a recalibration of education for value; and, by positing relationships as impactful, entrepreneurial, or excellent. Thus, where the response of academic labour to societal issues is shaped economically, it can only ever reflect the systemic crisis in which it sits.

Academics must be willing to analyse how their labour contributes to the production-process of capital rather than simply to resist the process of capitalist production. The role of intellectual practice at the level of

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society is to develop a theoretical understanding of the structuring forms of domination, such that prefigurative practices might be incubated inside institutions and ways of working. This means that where the internal structures and relations of capital appear hidden, the capital-relation appears natural or fetishised. Intellectual responses must be situated against this fetishisation, to reveal its genesis in the struggle to reproduce value. Where this collapses down into a focus upon capitalist production, it points towards hopes for a better capitalism, rather than moving beyond capital as social metabolic control. One of the key roles for such intellectual practice is to help communities and associations situate themselves against capital's valorisation process and against its limits, in order to understand how society is subjugated under blind economism. Marx (1974) argues for a new form of wealth as consciousness of human society, rather than being a non-alienated society. This is a society that is conscious of itself rather than hidden by the fetish, and which reminds us that value is a terrain of struggle (Holloway 1995; Hudis 2017).

9.1.1 Autonomy and Heteronomy

Here it is useful to uncover the relationship between the sphere of freedom or autonomy and the sphere of necessity or heteronomy (Marx 1991). In the former, the shortening of the working day for the production of necessities is the basic prerequisite. The realm of freedom oscillates around the ability to reduce the amount of labour-time determined by necessity. Clearly, this is subject to stresses in the production of everyday necessities, and the level of development of forces and relations of material production. Marx (1993) argues that in communal production, time is essential, and in particular winning time for other, non-essential production. This means that society must find mechanisms 'to distribute its time in a purposeful way, in order to achieve production adequate to its overall needs', with the critical, related point that this correlates with the need 'the individual has to distribute [her] time correctly in order to achieve knowledge in proper proportions or in order to satisfy the various demands on [her] activity' (ibid., pp. 172–73).

Machinery is fundamental to this process, although under the management of the associated workers 'distribution would start from a *changed* foundation of production' (ibid., p. 833), as a precondition for meaningful self-determination. Indeed, through collective production such distribution of necessary labour-power and means of production would flow through branches of industry (Marx 1992, p. 434). The very automation or human-machine augmentation and symbiosis that capital demands and develops in order to discipline and control labour makes possible an exodus from the society of capitalist work through the radical redisposal of the surplus time that arises as an outcome of that automation, alongside the new ways in which different groups can interconnect in that surplus time (Virno 2004).

Marx (1970b, 1992) is clear that in the transition to a system of collective production rooted in directly social labour there would need to be some form of recompense. He hints at a non-circulatory system of tokens that would enable individuals to draw down on the social consumption stocks, but he is clear that in this transition to a lower form of communism there is no money as commodity or bearer of value. In his later notebooks, Marx (1991, pp. 1015–16) describes the possibility for freeing the share of wages that underpins the worker's own consumption from 'its capitalist limit' such that it can be expanded in-line with 'the existing social productivity', as a necessary precursor to 'the full development of individuality'. Moreover, by efficiencies in the realm of heteronomy, a reduction in surplus labour and surplus product can enable an insurance fund for society, and underpin a communal deliberation of social reproduction as determined socially. Marx (ibid.) also states that necessary or surplus labour will operate through a process of mutualism that supports 'those not capable'.

These principles of removing money, overcoming wages as a constricted definition of labour, freeing time for individual development, and mutual deliberation of social reproduction become the foundations of a new social mode of production. Thus, in the communist future the realm of freedom is shaped by a widening of autonomy and the ability to produce necessities efficiently in a context of dignity. In this future, the sphere of heteronomy or necessity is subordinate to the sphere of freedom or autonomy, such that social labour for the production of necessities is

made marginal for each individual at the level of society. The point is to annihilate socially-necessary labour time and its mediations (Gorz 1982, 1985). In this mode, communism is universal rather than private property and the return of humans to themselves as directly social beings. Marx (1974) is clear that this is a movement away from the estrangement of existence from essence and of objectification from self-confirmation. This is a moment of self-awareness as a non-fetishised form of practice: 'Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution' (ibid., p. 90).

In the realm of freedom, intellectual work is mutually-constructed and cannot be organised by a power standing in command over the individual (Marx 1970a). Crucial here is the absolute denial of any power to subjugate the labour of others through appropriation (Marx and Engels 2002). Instead, through mutual dignity others contribute to the realisation of individual freedom (Marx 1970a), which for Hegel (1963 §23) was harmony between subjectivity and otherness by 'Being with oneself in another'. One outcome of this is an overcoming of the abstract separation of academic and intellectual labour from society, through the fragmentation of disciplinary separation and the extraction of specific subject-based skills that can be embedded in machines, organisations and processes for valorisation.

Holloway (2002) argues that we deceive ourselves if we believe that the structures which exist in order to reproduce capitalist social relations can be used as a means to overcome its alienating organisation of work. Whilst he makes this point for the structure of the democratic state as a symbol of failed revolutionary hope, his point might equally be made about the University, which is enclosed in its role 'as just one node in a web of social relations' and that has limited autonomy because it is 'shaped by the need to maintain the system of capitalist organisation of which it is a part' (Holloway 2002, p. 6). Therefore, intellectual work, as opposed to academic labour, must be recombined at the level of society in ensuring that knowledge is socialised, and that productive technologies are collectively controlled, such that socially-necessary goods and services form a realm of abundance beyond self-sufficiency. The intellectual project here demands an understanding of the relationship between heteronomy and autonomy, and the reintegration of modes of

analysing that relationship as a radical, social movement of possibility (Gorz 1989).

9.1.2 Rupturing Academic Labour Time

One of the qualities of this new movement must be freedom from the measurement of time, which degrades and deforms individuals into mere workers directed by and for value (Marx 1993). The idea of disposable time, or a widening of the realm of freedom and autonomy, sits against the imposition of necessary time, or the time for the production of commodities that regulate capitalist society through value (Gorz 1982). This requires the development of an alternative set of relations, predicated upon co-operation, full access to *both* the means of subsistence or the realm of necessity, and the realm of freedom (Engels 1987; Marx and Engels 1998). Time conditions our movement through society and society's movement through us. Thus, rejecting labour time and fighting for disposable time enables us to work on the negation of exploitation as a long-term project. This is a process of overcoming the determining, structural abstractions of the capital-relation, which act to separate our humanity from our being. The intention is to return that humanity to itself as a flow of being and becoming, which rests negatively on overcoming second-order mediations and positively through this principle of negativity as an ongoing process of renewing subjectivity.

Holloway (1992, p. 158) argues that this flow of being and becoming can rupture fetishised alienated society, which imprisons humanity, precisely because the sheer unrest of life is boundless beyond capital's ability to destroy it. Here, in considering our autonomy against the capital-relation and against existence-in-capital, we are reminded of the intellectual, revolutionary project of society that is a constant negation of its exploitation *both* through the revelation of the conditions of exploitation *and* by recognising that there is no blueprint for utopia. We walk or move by asking, and this composes the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things. This is the movement of dignity that points towards self-mediation, where asking is rooted in acts of love as a movement of absolute negativity through society, in order to prefigure alternatives.

The role of academics in this movement is conditioned by the production and circulation of value inside the University and across society. Inside the University academics condition the activity of each other and of their students: through the disciplinary imposition of work; through the fetishisation of status; by reproducing the capital-relation ideologically and in terms of labour-power; and, in the generation of performance metrics. As the University is a means of social reproduction inside transnational associations of capitals, the labour of academics is diffused across society. For academics, widening the space for autonomy means working against the capital-relation *both* inside the University with students and professional services staff *and* beyond the institution in society. Otherwise, indignant resistance can only offer temporary amelioration of labour injustices. The academic focus must be upon freedom through association. The academic must work for her own abolition at the level of society through 'the experience of the combined worker … in putting the theory into practice' through co-operation (Marx 1991, pp. 198–99).

9.1.3 Directly Social Academic Labour

The combined worker represents the abolition of the fetishised role of the academic, whilst retaining the intellectual content of her labour at the level of society. Intellectual activity as a communal good can be realised through an analysis of directly social labour and its relationship to human development, or new humanism (Dunayevskaya 1978; Frolov 1990; Hudis 2012). Here the communal character of production annihilates commodity-exchange and exchange-value, because of the focus upon 'activities determined by communal needs and communal purposes', grounded in labour 'posited as general labour prior to exchange' (Marx 1993, p. 108). Of course there must be mediation, but it cannot be conditioned by the value-form. This points towards a new, general character of work, which is radically different from labour because of the abolition of second-order mediations and also the communal character of production through which the community distributes necessities according to individual need. Here, production and distribution are dependent upon deliberation at the level of a communal network of associations, which

are not mediated systemically and abstractly by value. Thus, the pivot becomes the exchange of activities rather than commodities, and production is disconnected from valorisation.

Marx (1970b, 1991) believes that value will not simply end, rather the transition away from value will need to be worked at through accounts of the regulation of labour-time and the distribution of social labour, which avoid renewed commodification. This is a move away from reified academic labour and the mediation of employment by higher-level learning or human capital development. Rather, the abolition of such reification is a moment in the abolition of capital as the historical subject (Postone 2009). Thus, Marcuse (1941, p. 292) reiterates the importance of Marx's (1974) use of 'the Hegelian term *Aufhebung*, so that abolition also carries the meaning that a content is restored to its true form.' This true form is not a fetishised form of academic labour, rooted in utopian views of the public good, public intellectuallism or academic use-value, rather it is the return of human practice and essence to human being as 'self-conscious human activity' (Mészáros 2005, p. 180).

Such activity is given life in the range of radical academic projects and occupations, which are an attempt to re-inscribe HE as higher learning dissolved into the fabric of society, or in the reconstruction of the student as a producer of her educational life, with this as a precursor to her producing her social life. Whilst these ruptures risk fetishising or reifying radical education, they offer glimpses of self-conscious activity as mass intellectuality, which transgresses the classroom and moves into the production of knowledge in society. This is an ongoing process of decolonising knowledge, such that all lives are recognised as being able, because each of those lives produces socially-useful knowledge through its direct relationships. Uncovering this process makes concrete the demand to move beyond the fetish of the student experience, and to situate academic labour in the act of teaching against the student's socially and materially-constructed experience, such that academic practice becomes the deconstruction of that social and material experience by the student (Neary 2012). Here, the student and academic might glimpse themselves as direct, social producers engaged in self-conscious or self-actualising activity (hooks 1994).

9.2 Working for Autonomy

9.2.1 Transgressing the Classroom

If one potential starting point for the abolition of the class relation begins in the *becoming* of the student-worker, such becoming cannot simply lie in the classroom. It must transgress the boundaries of the classroom, in order to generate a radically recomposed identity beyond academic labour. This is not a process of human capital development through placement-based learning or entrepreneurial activity through knowledge transfer. These activities normalise overwork as a characteristic of the real subsumption of HE. Instead the focus is upon finding spaces through which to generate new forms of agency that address the crisis of value. This crisis must be addressed by widening the realm of freedom through which the student is a worker on her own soul and self, and her society, in order to decompose the violence of capital's repeated separation of labour-power, product, subjectivity and species-being from us. This pushes against the separation of our creativity from us.

Beyond the recomposition of student identities such that they become student-workers, this also impacts academic identities such that they become academic-activists who recognise their estrangement from their own labour-power as a commodity. As a starting point for a workers' enquiry of the historical and material conditions of academic labour, this enables academic protests around pensions reforms, student debt, ill-health and ill-being, precarious employment and casualisation, to be situated against processes of commodification, including marketisation and financialisation, in order that they can be theorised against-and-beyond value. Without such a theorisation it becomes impossible to negate the capital-relation through the expansion of the realm freedom and autonomy. Instead, the focus becomes about issues of free speech, academic autonomy, resistance to casualisation, and other tactical reforms of an otherwise brutalising system. This entails a focus upon the production of the self as a pedagogic moment grounded in self-mediation as the key organising principle for life.

This potential project for the recovery of agency refuses anxiety and reinstates the value of creative intervention against the revolutionary

accelerations of capital through class struggle that respects intersectional forms of exploitation (Neary 2011). Thus, autonomy is incubated beyond the classroom, rooted in the need to relate being and becoming as an ongoing process of negation in the present. This then enables us to forgive ourselves the need for constant, productive reinvention in the future, and to respond authentically to the estrangement of externally-imposed performance management. In moving beyond the subsumption of academic life, the project of abolishing HE as it is currently defined becomes a profoundly political moment. This project must be a robust and practical one beginning from a reimagining of the governance and regulation of HE (Neary and Winn 2017), such that its potential, co-operative, social formation can be extended across society.

The stakes for capital are high. The dissolution of HE as a coercive space-time re-forged inside-and-against student-debt, impact and research excellence, and employability and entrepreneurship, threatens not only business interests in the University itself, but also the generation of innovations that are championed for their role in increasing productivity across the economy. This is amplified by capital and labour flows between or across sectors, so that new associations of capitals or businesses emerge, and so that human capital might be reallocated and intensified. To challenge the logic that HE exists primarily as an engine of nationally-competitive productivity requires that we rethink the consensus shaping the civil society of HE in the service of capital, and work for the redirection of its energies to the collaborative development of human flourishing. Discourses of academic freedom, privilege and status obscures the potential power of academic labourers acting in solidarity inside-and-beyond the University. Technically, we have the power to bring the system down.

9.2.2 Projects of Decolonisation

Here the practical examples of decolonisation, such as the Dismantling the Master's House project (DTMH 2015), which asks: *why is my curriculum white?*, and which emerges from a tradition of anti-oppressive, anti-capitalist movements, are critical (Narayan 2017). This work asks

what agency looks like, in the face of a systemic enabling of specific identities, and the skills, knowledge and capabilities those identities are claimed to contain and reproduce. It develops counter-narratives as movements of decolonisation the integration of activity and theory, in order to support regimes of self-determination. At the level of society, these potentially widen the sphere of autonomy because they offer symbolic and spatial forms of counter-hegemony that take a series of positions made marginal and situate them against capitalist domination and exploitation. As a result, community programmes of the Black Panthers Party like brothers on the block, the breakfast programme and the Youth Institute form social critiques that offer an alternative reading of the potential to widen spaces for autonomy (Bloom and Martin 2012).

These programmes are fundamental in demonstrating the pedagogic potential for a radical restructuring of the existing forms and institutions of struggle, focused upon creating and organisational framework capable of self-activity. In this way they map across to the radical, collective organising of groups like the Escuelta in Columbia and FISH in Australia (Motta 2017) developing social alliances between movements and families, which enable parents and especially mothers to undertake racial and economic justice work. Here, community projects that alter consciousness against the dominant mode of capitalist power, rooted in whiteness, masculinity, ableism and sexual norms, enable communities to develop their own intellectuality. This echoes those struggling against false and double consciousness as a mode of survival and in generating a false understanding of self and community (du Bois 2016; Newton and Lenin 2004).

This highlights part of the issue for academic labour in reimagining its role, precisely because too often academics imagine that the State is the final arbiter for the role of education in society, rather than seeing it as integral to a system that destroys tools for thinking beyond capitalism. Radical community projects, shaped by feminist, anti-racist, anti-ableist, and queer praxis, offer us a set of diagnostics for epistemic and material justice, which pivot around our ability to learn from a new war of position, rooted in survival pending the transformation of capitalist production. In this process, survival programmes form a first response to state retrenchment, precarious employment and livelihoods, and poverty. Here,

examples from black communities enable us to reflect on responses to the imposition of austerity across the social terrain. One outcome of such imposition is the proletarianisation of academic labour, against which cries for academic autonomy or freedom are a meaningless survival strategy. Instead, meaning might emerge through a focus on dignity as a form of revolutionary inter-communalism (Newton and Lenin 2004), in order to recreate academic practice as an alternative social function operating at the level of society. The role for academic labour here is how to widen the sphere of autonomy beyond the University, in order to connect with the narratives of people who are exploited and marginalised every day.

The narratives of marginalised voices from inside-and-outside HE have both the urgency and the capacity to enable new forms of refusal to emerge. Crucial to their success is the recuperation of their autonomy in terms of the governance of the University, the radical or militant nature of its research, scholarship and teaching, and academic labour's ability to challenge the property regimes that enclose it. We might then take a focus on autonomy as a starting-point for the unfolding of self-mediation, rooted in the domain of values, as a positive self-consciousness rooted in negation of second-order mediations over our lives (Mészáros 2010). The ability to open out and critique the production of value, such that values can be understood as an alternative form of constructing society, with a refusal of hierarchy and predetermined relations of production, connects to Marx's (1970b) belief that it is possible to move beyond liberal interpretations of equality and freedom, which serve to impose an equal standard on an equal individuals, and as a result impose ongoing intersectional abuses.

9.2.3 Freedom Against Separation

This matters because autonomy can only be developed through the negation and transcendence of alienation, which in turn demands a radical, ontological transformation of society. Constant self-criticism of practice is a cornerstone of this transformation, enacted through self-mediation. Moreover, there is the potential here to move beyond existence-in-capital and the essence of what it means to be objectified inside capitalism,

through a re-imagination of the relationship between the individual and her species (Gorz 1982; Marx 1974). Here, the idea of self-mediation as a mode of emancipation through autonomy offers the potential for overcoming the partial nature of existence in the name of the new subjectivity. However, this process begins from the revelation that we are alienated, and that our survival depends upon our developing a false or double consciousness. Thus, our response must situate autonomy socially, and reinterpret it against *both* value *and* abstraction, through mutualism in production, circulation and consumption (Mészáros 2015).

This is incredibly problematic for academics, whose work is predicated upon separation and status either as individuals or in subjects/disciplines. As a result, academics are unable to articulate their labour in association with other producers, except through citation or the structures of the academic peloton. In the process, our connection to metabolic life is severed. The focus is the objectification of academic practice, which reinforces and is reinforced by performance management precisely because individuals are treated as data-points or human capital that is itself an object of study. This amplifies the problem raised by Gorz (1982) that those who identify or define themselves through their work will not accept its abolition. Any movement that emerges around academic labour must push beyond labour rights, to examine the fragmented nature of that labour and its obsession with the necessary or heteronomous production of academic commodities. Whilst the academic and wider society perceives such production in terms of privileged, academic freedom, in reality labour in the capitalist University kettles the realm of autonomy and direct social production, precisely because it aims at the production of value. Freedom against separation must refuse such negative, academic subjectivity.

9.3 Mass Intellectuality

9.3.1 Against the Colonisation of Subjectivity

The movement against unfreedom critiques academic practices and the generation of skills, knowledge and capabilities that have been separated from society and fetishised inside the University. It refuses the general

intellect as the commodification of the potential and expertise generated in work, and instead looks to liberate what has been stolen or to recognise practices that have been made marginal so that they can be voiced. This begins from the organisation of knowledge production inside the University through the solidarity between student-worker and academic-activist, as a point of departure for work that is socially-useful. Useful work emerges through tasks and events that reproduce society against-and-beyond value production, as a new form of sociability.

In this process, reclaiming the concept of living knowledge, or the liberation of the general intellect as a form of *mass intellectuality*, is a central part of the project of self-mediation (Hall and Winn 2017; Manzerolle 2010; Roggero 2011). Mass intellectuality is a direct, social force of production flowing between the individual and society. For Virno (2001), this sociability transcends organisational or technological determinism, or the fetishisation of social or individual entrepreneurialism, and instead focuses upon 'the depository of cognitive competences that cannot be objectified in machinery.' Mass intellectuality emerges from: 'the more generic attitudes of the mind [which] gain primary status as productive resources; these are the faculty of language, the disposition to learn, memory, the power of abstraction and relation and the tendency towards self-reflexivity [that form] the inexhaustible potential of language to execute contingent and unrepeatable statements' (ibid.). This recognises that capital is attempting to valorise life, including effects, emotions, relationships, and subjectivity though the reproduction of the general intellect as mass intellectuality. In this project, valorisation is extended into the capacities of the soul and of being, such that it moves out of the factory into society.

Capital moves into the last redoubt of our humanity as it attempts to colonise our souls by asking us to love our work and by projecting that work as a privileged vocation. As a result academic work is fetishised in the name of the public good, societal grand challenges or the student experience. However, this is a moment for refusal and the recombination of living knowledge in its cognitive and affective states, into the self and society. As capital struggles to valorise and to reproduce itself, it constricts the space through which human life as a form of shared wealth can be reproduced beyond the value-form. A dynamic process of resistance

begins in the refusal to be colonised at the level of the soul, and in describing ways to reappropriate the knowledge that has been stolen from communities. This process of resistance has a separate, powerful starting point in understanding the ways in which capital has already colonised the souls of communities made marginal, for whom the creation of a double or false consciousness has been central to survival. Describing the ways in which these communities have approached decolonisation generates alternative possibilities for living knowledge, or abundance, which form starting points for addressing the crisis of value that has underpinned a range of socio-economic and socio-environmental, global emergencies.

9.3.2 An Alternative Political Economy for Intellectual Activities

It is possible to reimagine mass intellectuality as a critique of subjectivity in its relationship to the prevalent mode of knowledge production. As capital extends valorisation across the social fabric, it pollutes life by attempting to valorise human values. This forms a crack or an opportunity to reveal the systemic dehumanisation of value, and to define alternative forms of sociability at the level of society. In terms of academic practice, the potential is for the liberation: first, of those craft and technical skills, capabilities, and knowledge of the social individual that have been absorbed into the things the academic produces; and second, of the academic from the process of production and ultimately from her labour and the sale of her labour-power. As a form of sociability that it is not restricted by capitalist time, these activities might structure and determine that time for other, autonomous ends (Postone 1993).

Struggles *for* mass intellectuality are an attempt to build a counter-hegemonic position rooted in solidarity and sharing, and related to the social and co-operative use of the knowledge, skills and practices that are created through labour. Thus, liberating science and technology from *inside-and-against* capital's competitive dynamics is central to moving *beyond* exploitation. It becomes possible to focus on alternative educational practices that develop socialised knowledge as a direct, social force of production, and to deny capital's abstract, normalised monopoly over

the productive resources and potential of society. Participatory work between students, academics, professional services staff and communities made marginal, form a dynamic site in the struggle to recuperate social productive power, for example through educational commons rooted in critical pedagogy and the community-building of alternative educational settings like student occupations or social science centres (Amsler and Neary 2012; Hall 2015).

However, the potential fetishisation of mass intellectuality as a movement *for* emancipation requires that it is critiqued in terms of class struggles that have multiple beginnings, and which emerge from the contradictions of capitalism itself (Bologna 2014). Struggle is a process of movement that connects intersectional beginnings to the idea of intellectual work at the level of society, enabled because by *asking we walk*. Thus, the focus for intellectual work shifts from the academic as reified labourer, to the socialised worker who labours in the social factory, and this includes the collectivised worker who produces in industry. Here, conceptions of undercommoning the University, of the development of the academic commons, the use of free and open source software and copyfarleft licenses, and the realisation of peer-to-peer networks, points towards an alternative political economy for intellectual activities and its immanence to an alternative conception of social and personal relations.

9.3.3 Co-operation as a Movement Beyond Exploitation

Academic alienation denies social production its full potential, in part because academic labour has been shaped to reinforce the idea of material and immaterial scarcity, including the availability of privileged status. This denies the dignity of self-actualisation, or the capacity to live more fully and deeply (hooks 1994). Neary and Winn (2017) have begun to articulate a definition of co-operative governance, regulation and pedagogic practice, alongside funding as a transitional mediation towards a measure of reciprocal rather than universal equivalence. This points towards an alternative, political and pedagogical space inside which academic labour might be repurposed for mass intellectuality, and

through which the democratic deficit existing inside institutions might be refused. In this argument, fusing the democratic regulation of transnational worker co-operatives, with the circuits of production and distribution of the peer-to-peer economy, develops an open, co-operative set of possibilities. These form pedagogic moments that ground autonomy in the mutual, democratic, social focus of co-operatives (Marx 1866, 1970b).

Examples of co-operative HE tend to focus upon the creation of new experiments notionally outside the financialised sector, rather than the conversion or radical dissolution of existing institutions (Social Science Centre 2018; Winn 2014). Such responses are conditioned by the structural domination of wage labour, and the reality that the co-operative space has to exist inside the totalising relations of production of capitalist society. However, they offer alternative possibilities for reintegrating disciplines across society, and for liberating intellectual work through communities rather than modifying it inside institutions for value. As such, they contribute to the productive potential of society through the reclamation of knowledge that is situated across a global Commons rooted in critical pedagogy, and which is governed through society rather than for it.

Thus, the co-operative potential of mass intellectuality, situated across a range of intersectional narratives about knowledge-production, makes it possible to liberate the democratic capabilities of academic labour, first as labour, and second as a transnational, collective activity inside open co-operatives. This underscores to Cleaver's (1993) call for '[a] politics of alliance against capital […] not only to accelerate the circulation of struggle from sector to sector of the class, but to do so in such a manner as to build a post-capitalist politics of difference without antagonism.' Moreover, it articulates a politics of educational autonomy (Dinerstein 2015) as a form of collective, potential, pedagogic energy that refocuses the academic as a socialised worker. Such potential energy underpins the possibility that the associated producers might reappropriate knowledge at the level of society, which capital has subsumed by recalibrating activity for-value through labour. As Postone (1993, p. 373) argues Marx's beautiful, emancipatory vision of a postcapitalist society emerges from 'the historically generated possibility that people might begin to control what they create rather than being controlled by it.'

9.4 Human Richness and Social Metabolic Control

9.4.1 Transitional Movements

There is no blueprint for utopia that describes a life beyond alienation. However, this is not to say that alienation operates simply as a negative heuristic. As Sayers (1998, 2007) makes clear, for Marx alienation is a necessary stage in a historical and material process that leads towards a higher form of unity or sociability. In this process the community develops through concrete, direct social production in its interaction with self-mediating individuals. Marx's approach to alienation is not about the revelation of a transhistorical human essence with an absolute conception, rather overcoming alienation is a process that reveals a diversity of human richness grounded in the association of self-mediating producers of life.

Mészáros (2010) stresses that we can only move beyond alienation by eradicating the system of capital rather than attempting to divert our energies into the overthrow or renewal of the capitalist State. The eradication of capital refuses and dismantles its vertical division of labour and separation of power. Instead, the democratic process is embedded within the everyday production of the realms of heteronomy and autonomy, as a form of horizontalism. This agenda is predicated upon solidarity ecosystems that can mobilise a new movement of society as a form of dignified, direct, social production. A life beyond alienation is a process of working for dignity, in order to describe 'the *rich* human being … The human being *in need of a totality of human life-activities* – the [woman] in whom [her] own realisation exists as an inner necessity, as *need*' (Marx 1974, p. 98). This emerges in opposition to the fetishism of status, including its quantification, and instead it questions the social metabolic control of our existence. It is only by enabling a horizontal view of society, as a moment of democratic legitimacy in the production of society, that the negation of capital as a system of alienation can be imagined as 'positive self-consciousness' and self-determination (Marx 1974, p. 100), which in turn reverses 'the separation of labour and the worker from the conditions of labour' (Marx 2004, pp. 271–2).

Here, Marx's (1970b) *Critique of the Gotha Programme* develops some dynamic principles upon which this reversal might be based with ramifi-

cations for academic labour. First, he is clear that co-operative society based on common ownership of the means of production is a transitional movement of direct, social production that is not rooted in exchange, and in which the value of labour-power is not transferred to the products of that labour. The example of indigenous or community educational projects describe activities that cannot be commodified because they are not mediated through alienated labour. Instead the products of labour emerge directly as a component of total labour. A second, connected principle is the refusal of ownership beyond the rights to individual means of consumption. Work becomes the exchange of activities, rather than the alienation of labour-power, and as in experiments for co-operative, educational production or educational commons, this enables access to 'the means of consumption' and the realm of necessity. This work is mediated directly between producers, rather than abstractly in the market, giving access to the realms of necessity and autonomy.

A crucial third principle is a rejection of liberal rights rooted in 'the application of an equal standard'. This recognises intersectional levels of exploitation and domination by stressing that society is constructed from unequal individuals shaped by their differences. Here, pedagogic projects that question capital's quantification of individuals whom it brings into competition and comparison through the application of 'an equal standard', force us to respect the dignity of difference and the unequal performance of academic labour. This recalibrates the idea of right and human rights inside communist society, because second-order mediations that separate individuals and their characteristics or essences have been abolished. As a result, the means of life moves beyond its deformed, estranged, abstract appearance, in which we are each expected to conform to productive norms, such that we can internalise the value of from each according to her ability, to each according to her needs.

9.4.2 The Movement of Academic Labour Against Itself

Intellectual work, as opposed to alienated academic labour, is at the core of enabling society to become self-educating, such that the idea of

student-worker and academic-activist are recombined. This enables self-mediation and the individual production of society through non-commodified activities, to become a pedagogical act at the level of individual essence. Here, education is a deeply personal activity, and one that occurs in society as an act of liberation in the generation of meaning. This follows from Marx and Engels' (1998) idea of the *practical materialist* (communist) who wishes to revolutionise the world as it is, because another world is possible. Thus, the movement of academic labour must be against itself because revolution demands collective, intellectual transformation. It can be a movement against discourses and metrics for excellence, entrepreneurship, impact or student satisfaction, but in order to overcome self-estrangement and alienation it has to situate them as a systemic denial of both being and becoming. It has to situate them against the crisis of value, in order to reimagine subjectivity at the level of society. This cannot be achieved from inside the University as a critical organ for the reproduction of the capital-relation.

One way for academics to engage in this process is to consider how to disrupt the flows of value inside-and-through the University into transnational associations of capitals. Various tactics are possible that directly affect valorisation processes: undercommoning the University (Moten and Harney 2013) by stealing or liberating resources, most importantly time; initiating a workers' enquiry to reveal layers of exploitation, estrangement and alienation (Haiven and Khasnabish 2014); the refusal to contribute the excess of surplus labour upon which universities depend; building alliances with students around performance management that underpins commodification and competition; or struggles for free universities without borders (Neary 2012; Thorburn 2012). This is intellectual work as a practical-critical activity (University for Strategic Optimism 2011).

However, such responses need to be developed as a reflection of differential experiences of exploitation. Narratives from academics of colour, precariously employed academics, academics who have been made ill through overwork, marginalised academics with caring responsibilities, each need to be elevated and presented, in order to demonstrate how the system shames and needs to be dismantled. Such responses also need to be dissolved into the fabric of social solidarity. For instance, actions in

universities around labour rights need to be escalated around issues of gender inequality, and connected to critiques of university governance and executive control. These narratives amplify the use of data to manage performance and the concomitant proletarianisation imposed through precarity. The ongoing, negative impact on academic and student health can then be situated against the crisis of value, through the imposition of overwork, the promotion of individualised risk, and to the annihilation of collective engagement in the face of finance and the market.

As a result, such struggles contain a rich political content that can be used to reinforce the bonds between tenured and precarious academics, between academics and students and professional services staff, and between academic labourers and society. We need to imagine a world in which the use of difference for exploitation can be abolished. There is a need to join in solidarity beyond the University, to other struggles against a life mediated by money, commodity-exchange and the market. Through pensions or debt strikes, refusals to complete student satisfaction questionnaires, protest against casualisation and an attrition on labour rights for non-tenured staff, struggles point towards collective rather than individual insurance against the future, and in describing what a rich life might look like. If we cannot imagine this as a social problem, and can only see it in terms of single issues, power-vested-in-money will flow so that it kettles us elsewhere.

Academics are not simply professors, teaching assistants, postgraduates, researchers, teachers and so on. We are mothers, carers, brothers, social service users, friends, community organisers, volunteers, and we exist in a world where care, love, faith, courage, generosity, respect, dignity are being commodified. We are being told that our relationships are conditional and risk-based, and this is squeezing the life out of us. Thus, Marx (1866) argued the importance of aiding movements that push in the same direction. Academics might begin with single issues, like pensions, and then take their indignation from the picket line and the teach-in, back into the institution, into teaching spaces and the curriculum. They might also take their indignation into the ongoing use of zero-hour and casualised contracts, to find active ways to support colleagues without tenure, including active engagement in trades unions and more importantly across trades unions, including student unions.

This has to flow beyond policymakers who wish to define educational lives through value rather than our shared, humane values, just as they wish to define social life through the market and as human capital. Only in this way can freedom emerge through socialised humans rationally mediating their metabolism with nature and science (Marx 1991, p. 959). This is intellectual work as a communist pedagogy where individual energies are mobilised 'in the service of the working class again and again and in every new context' (Benjamin 2005, p. 274). It fuses with the Zapatista call for dignity, as we move by asking questions about our current context, such that new movements are constantly emerging against capital.

9.4.3 The Abolition of Academic Labour

The commune presents itself as a lever for abolishing class rule through the emancipation of labour, where everyone works 'and productive labour ceases to be [an alienating] class attribute' (Marx 2008, p. 50). At the core of this process lies education in the commune as a movement of self-education underpinning self-government for the producers through united co-operative societies that points towards possible communism (ibid., p. 47, 50). Marx (1974) was clear that this could only be achieved through collective action in exerting control over material powers, in order to abolish the division of labour. Here, he follows Hegel (1963) in situating such collective action around mutual recognition, in which institutionally-defined status has been removed. Thus, the removal of status as a moment in the abolition of academic labour is an ongoing activity of radical, democratic praxis. This forms a movement of permanent revolution (Gunn and Wilding 2012), designed to overwhelm the imposition of abstract mediations that constitute society such that the struggle for self-mediation and self-determination come to define society against abstraction (Hudis 2012).

To define a blueprint for how we do this is impossible beyond the struggle for academic dignity as one strand of the struggle for dignity in society. However, this process of transformation and struggle is enabled by accepting liberation from alienation in our hearts and using this as motive power to question how we create a society of dignity grounded in

mutual recognition as a new form of wealth beyond value (Holloway 2002, 2015). This reflects much of the narrative context for alienation, which is something we feel as a profound sense of rupture in the soul. This is why reformist positions that wish to reclaim the public University cannot succeed, precisely because they cannot overcome the rupture, fragmentation, separation and isolation of a life inside the capitalist University. At issue is what a non-alienated life might look like. It must be a life beyond institutional separation and the separation of status from self and others. It must be a life beyond the pressures to commodify one's own work and that of others. As a result, it is the need to reproduce conditions inside which we can become whole rather than partial, unified rather than fragmented, healed rather than ruptured, full of heart rather than heart-broken.

The struggle for academic dignity is therefore a struggle against academic labour and a struggle for love. Clearly, it has to emerge inside the crisis of value and the annihilation of work (good Gorz 1982, 1985), which are recomposing structural control through second-order mediations. However, intersectional, communal, post-colonial and feminist narratives lead us away from a commodified existence. In hearing and celebrating the legitimacy of other knowledges, from peoples and perspectives that have been made marginal and oppressed, it becomes possible to ground a new analysis through a more deeply felt relational project. As Nordahl (1987, pp. 766, 769) notes, this celebrates that 'Communist individuals are different natures of the same social substance' and that the crucial issue is 'participation in activities which allow them to express their individualities'.

Throughout his early work, Marx emphasised the return of humans to themselves and constantly use the word *real*. The stresses the toxic, dehumanising abstraction of capitalist power over human life, which is unreal and which demands catastrophic psychological energy, in order to exist. Academic labour in its current form contributes to dehumanising abstraction, but it also enables a wider dissemination of projects of hope as the real appropriation of human nature (Marx 1974). The struggle for autonomy inside the University is the real struggle *against* the University. It is the struggle to abolish the University as an incubator for alienated labour. This is a movement for intellectual work at the level of society, as a social

project that signals the return of humans to themselves through direct, social production. It is a struggle to reintegrate mass intellectuality into individual and communal practice, and to enable humans to engage more positively with nature, as a negation of the crisis of value. The struggle for autonomy inside University must overflow the institution, to point towards a new society of self-mediation and self-determination. This is the struggle to question the conditions and contours of our social life. It is a movement of hearts against the present state of things; most importantly it is a movement of hearts against enclosure and foreclosure. This is the real movement.

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