WE ARE THE UNIVERSITY

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NATIONWIDE DAY OF STUDENT ACTION

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THE RETURN OF RADICAL STUDENT POLITICS: ARE WE UP TO THE CHALLENGE?

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The world is seeing something of a revival in radical student politics – action on a massive scale is taking place amongst students in the UK, in Greece, in Turkey and in Chile. And the week before last, in little old New Zealand too a Nationwide Day of Student Action took place. 200 students stormed the Hunter Building at Victoria University to protest the cutting or closure of Gender Studies, International Relations, University Preparation and the Crime and Justice Centre as well as the sacking of lecturers. Likewise at Auckland, a planned Teach-In in the Library Basement became the first step to a full-scale movement to wrest control back from an increasingly heavy-handed management who is trying to stymie academic freedoms. These actions herald a possible return to the radical student politics that had their heyday in the 1960s and 70s – but are we up to the challenge?

It is a familiar refrain amongst veteran student activists and champions of left-liberal causes that most of the current student population doesn't give a shit. And similarly, those lumped into the 'apathetic' category are seen to believe that the episodic small-scale protests that occur are largely irrelevant to their own lives. They are represented as only wanting to get in, get learnt, get out and get paid. Ultimately, for mass student action to be successful these two groups need to stop talking past each other and we need to recognize that all of us have the capacity to care - but that people also care differently.

So for those of you who haven't engaged in student politics before, maybe you would care if you knew how it affected you personally?

It affects you personally when your freedom to choose what you wish to study is restricted by upper management. It affects you personally when universities try to shut down protests and curtail your fundamental democratic right to free speech. It affects you personally when your lecturers don't have enough time for you – not because they don't want to make time – but because the university is sucking them dry with its ridiculous demands for research output and accountability.

It affects you personally when you have to work twenty hours a week on top of your university workload, just to scrape by. Or when you have to live at home with your parents because living in Auckland is too expensive. It affects you personally when you graduate with $40,000-$50,000 worth of student debt which, for most people, you will be paying off for the next twenty or thirty years. To shoulder that much debt for the sake of your future employment is just plain irrational – and there's no guarantee your degree will secure you a job anymore anyway. So get involved in the upcoming protests, if not for everyone else – then for yourself. Because ultimately you are the one who will have to shoulder these burdens, and it sucks pretty hard to have to do it alone.

So are we up to the challenge? Fuck yeah we are. Whether you're on the left or the right, whether this affects you as an individual or as part of the collective student body, get out there and make yourself heard. Who knows, you might actually enjoy it.

William Kim, undergraduate student at Elam School of Fine Arts, $ tick-tock-kaching*, 2011.*

of the question, about the interrogative form of thought" (204). In short, in order for the professoriat to fully carry out their responsibility to the future of the profession, they must create works that allow new modes of thinking in that profession to become possible, just as innovative works of the past have allowed us to think today. Needless to say, in humanities disciplines where the student is initiated into the academy on arrival, this "professing" role is also available for the student, in the mode of humanities learning that Spivak calls the "uncoercive rearrangement of desire" (*Ethics* 615). In this sense Derrida introduces the modality of the "as if" in fiction, in fabulation, that is appropriate to all *oeuvres*,

> not only singularly *oeuvres d'art*, the fine arts (painting, sculpture, cinema, music, poetry, literature, and so forth), but also... all the discursive idealities, all the symbolic or cultural productions that define, in the general field of the university, the disciplines said to be in the Humanities—and even the juridical disciplines and the production of laws, and even a certain structure of scientific objects in general (212).

Speaking of academic outputs, he claims that he will "not hasten for the moment to reduce these "objects" (of professorial activity) to fictions, simulacra, or works of art, while acting as if we already had at our disposal reliable concepts of fiction, of art, or of the work" (212). Even without such definitions, for Derrida the work of the professor ultimately cannot be simply the "competent exercise of some knowledge" in a constative or techno-scientific sense, but must be an imaginative exploration of the limits of the very field in a way which cannot be undertaken with pre-existing conditions.

Derrida's account of the unconditional university speaks directly to the goals of many student-led occupations of universities in recent times. It addresses the autonomous and unlimited demands which have and should be made of the university, as the university can only be truly "universal" if it is a space without limit. From this perspective, the neo-liberal quantification of university inputs and outputs, indexed to credit hours, rankings, productivity, and—most of all—debt, becomes a regime that aims to bond students' personal aspirations and growth to the demands of the market. But other types of value are possible, and they will not be available at some distant point of freedom granted to those with an excellent GPA or good PBRF ranking. They must instead be enacted immediately, in our relations with each other, so that new forms of collective value can be discovered outside the coercive principles of competition and productivity. As Judith Butler explains, the autonomy we seek as individuals can only be found together:

> In this sense, we must be undone in order to do ourselves: we must be part of a larger social fabric of existence in order to create who we are. This is surely the paradox of autonomy ... If the social world… must change in order for autonomy to become possible, then individual choice will prove to be dependent from the start on conditions that none of us author at will, and no individual will be able to choose outside the context of a radically altered social world. That alteration comes from an increment of acts, collective and diffuse, belonging to no single subject, and yet one effect of these alterations is to make acting like a subject possible (100).

space seems "more archaic and imaginary than ever", while also seeming to fail to engage the political as we might hope. "Hence the necessity to rethink the concepts of the possible and the impossible" (210).

Nevertheless, Derrida claims that "the idea of this space of the academic type has to be symbolically protected by a kind of absolute immunity, as if its interior were inviolable [...] even if and especially if it must not prevent us from addressing ourselves to the university's outside without any utopic neutrality" (219). Derrida, the philosopher whose convoluted style is routinely mocked by Anglo-Saxon critics, becomes disarmingly direct and clear here, as he often does when discussing institutional imperatives:

> This freedom or immunity of the university and par excellence of its Humanities is something to which we must lay claim, while committing ourselves to it with all our might. Not only in a verbal and declarative fashion, but in work, in act, and in what we make happen with events (219).

For Derrida, this freedom is not dispensed by a benevolent state bureaucracy as Humboldt sought in the nineteenth century, but is instead claimed through acts that are and should be the hallmark of the professor. Derrida notes that the word "professor", of Latin origin, had only a religious sense in English before the establishment of the university in the 13th and 14th centuries. [He also notes that the word "fable" also comes from this root, thus fiction is tied to the term]. To "profess" was to take public vows of a religious order. Derrida turns to Austin's distinction between constative ("it is") and performative ("making things happen") speech acts, noting that to profess is not simply to commit to the craft of holding constative scientific-technical knowledge; but prior to taking up this craft to make a pledge, to commit one's responsibility, even to fight for something in the future. "What matters here is this promise, this pledge of responsibility, which is reducible to neither theory nor practice" (214). If the professor has power in a world of generalised archivisation techniques and knowledge circulation, it is in this commitment: "Beyond and in addition to knowledge, know-how, and competence, a testimonial commitment, a freedom, a responsibility under oath, a sworn faith obligates [the professor] to render accounts to some tribunal yet to be defined" (222). One must work for the university not in response to the contingencies of practical management, but in light of the judgement of those to come in the future.

Derrida then moves on to the question of the kind of work that is implied in this commitment. It is not simply work as labour, for "we know better than ever today that a gain in production can correspond to a diminishing of work" (221). Instead the professor must engage in the production of works (*oeuvres*) that carry this signature mark of responsibility in their profession, and which "remain after and beyond the time of the operation" (216). If such a work is to *be* critical in the performative sense, rather than merely talking *about* the critical, it cannot remain bound by traditional genres of critique, but must take up an "unconditional right to ask critical questions not only about the history of the concept of man, but about the history even of the notion of critique, about the form and the authority

THE UNIVERSITY UNDER CAPITALISM

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No matter how peaceful our classrooms and our leafy campuses might appear, we must never forget that the university is a place for critique and contestation. Indeed, if there is one thing that is at home in the practice of actually existing universities then it is contestation. Yes, the university has historically been the locus for projects of the formation of national culture, for exclusion and the promotion of sectarian interests, the certification and acculturation of elites. But the university is also much more than that. As we have seen through history, and again in the most recent riots and occupations in Greece, Britain and Chile and in the actions currently underway at Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin, the university can be and is being contested.

What is today being contested is the promise of the university, and our sense that this promise is being dashed against the rocks. To fathom what the promise is, I propose to evoke a text by Jacques Derrida that he presented in several forms in the years prior to his death, known as 'The University without Condition'. In this text Derrida identifies the way that the modern university claims for itself the right to be without condition.

> This university demands and ought to be granted in principle, besides what is called academic freedom, an *unconditional* freedom to question and to assert, or even, going still further, the right to say publicly all that is required by research, knowledge, and thought concerning the *truth*....The university *professes* the truth, and that is its profession. It declares and promises an unlimited commitment to the truth.[1]

Derrida is clear, however, that this profession of truth is a frustrated profession. It works around a promise that is always compromised. It never finally arrives, in pure and perfect actuality.

> This university without conditions does not, *in fact*, exist, as we know only too well. Nevertheless, in principle and in conformity with its declared vocation, its professed essence, it should remain an ultimate place of critical resistance – and more than critical – to all the powers of dogmatic and unjust appropriation.[2]

The powers of dogmatic appropriation, I suggest, are as ever at the door today. Derrida identifies the state powers, economic powers and the powers of the media, those forces that threaten – because of the fact that they are threatened by – the reality of democracy. What is important is to recognise that the university is always conditioned. Today, it is being ever more conditioned by what we would be mistaken to call anything other than capitalism.

Capitalism is a fundamentally elusive referent. We do not need to read the *New*

Zealand Herald or the *National Business Review* to sense that the elites that run this country do not have much of an idea about what capitalism involves.

So let us be clear. Capitalism is not a regime. It is not an economic system that governs in certain countries and not in others. Capitalism is an inclination, a leaning or a tendency towards capital, towards ever expanding money, towards money which begets money.

Capitalism manifests itself in the university in a variety of ways. We see it, for example, in the rendering of students as consumers, something which presupposes a certain prior knowledge on behalf of students of the scope and content of what one will learn. Capitalism also introduces new and complex demands between teachers and students, above all the demand that student-consumers will *pay*.

The inclination towards capital is also visibly obvious in the opportunities for advertising increasingly targeted at students. We see this from the litter of advertising that fills open spaces in the university and finds its ways into the naming of lecture theatres and indeed entire buildings.

We see capitalism in the university in the increasing direction of research towards commercial purposes and support for research and the criteria for promotion towards the attraction of external research funding.

Beyond these visible symptoms, though, perhaps the most important dynamics of the subsumption of the university under capitalism occurs in the transformation of the categories through which one thinks about the purposes of the university, the participants in the university and those who might have a stake in the university. At base capitalism involves recoding the categories through which we understand the university. Capitalism involves coding the university as a machine for the production of as many functionaries as are required for the varying demands of industry, coding learners as receptacles to be filled until overflowing with useful knowledge and coding those who have a stake in the university as those responsible for the endless expansion of capital rather than as citizens who might participate in and benefit from a thoughtful, culturally vibrant, sustainable and just society.

Such a transformation does not take place overnight. It involves an often imperceptible shift that emerges very gradually, not through the application of a shock doctrine but through a gradual tightening of impositions and a gradual loosening of what were previously upheld as standards. This strategy of gradualism can come to a head, at a point at which a constant quantitative pressure produces what is later recognised as having involved a qualitative shift.

Of course the university can continue under capitalism, in name if not in concept. But no matter how deplorable the situation is at present, capitalism, which is not a regime

> that is also tautological. Instead of accepting the idea that the market defines value, we have to suspend the market model entirely in favour of an alternative system that defines value differently.(11)

The opening of this alternative value system may ironically be found in the heart of the university itself.

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The university should thus also be the place in which nothing is beyond question, not even the current and determined figure of democracy, not even the traditional idea of critique, meaning theoretical critique, and not even the authority of the "question" form, of thinking as "questioning." That is why I spoke without delay and without disguise of deconstruction.

— Jacques Derrida, "The University without Condition"

Discussing Marx's concept of crisis, Hay notes that "[C]risis is derived from the Greek, Kríno, Krísis (to decide) and refers to a moment of decisive intervention, a moment of transformation, a moment of rupture, [... of] objective contradiction yet subjective intervention" (Spivak, Critique 323). In light of the itinerary traced above it is no surprise that one of the most historically informed recent accounts of "the idea of the university" is also the most utopian. In 1998 Derrida delivered a lecture at Stanford eventually published as "The University Without Condition," an essay which reflects on what the University should be, and also makes suggestive asides on the role the visual arts may take. Derrida's characteristic approach is to head straight to the central defining concepts of the university: the university as the space of universal freedom; the professor; the function of academic work and academic works. Under critical pressure, these central concepts prove themselves to provide openings to a future: rather than seeking adaptation to the various challenges to the university from without, Derrida seeks the future within, in a kind of "intellectual occupation." He notes that if the university is to have a role in the questions of human truth, it must firstly be through "unconditional discussion", in a space where research and re-elaboration can take place "without presupposition." This is not in order for such discussion to "enclose itself" there, but "on the contrary, so as to find the best access to a new public space transformed by new techniques of communication, information, archivization, and knowledge production" (Derrida "The University without Condition", hereafter UC, 203). This thorough yet provisional embrace of utopia is perhaps reminiscent of Spivak's well-known use of the term "strategic essentialism." Derrida is not nostalgic for any actual university past, noting that "this unconditionality... the invincible force of the university… has never been in effect" (206). In another talk, Mochlos, Derrida establishes Kant as an architect of this space of freedom in the modern university, but notes that Kant's price is high—Kant achieves the space of freedom intellectually by removing the university from the corrupting public domain of the political. Such a non-politicised "public" space of "immunity" *inside* the university, Derrida is quick to note, has never existed or been tenable "in fact or by law" (UC 219). And in the transformation and permeation of institutional and disciplinary boundaries being brought about in a globalising academic economy, such a

could now describe the investment agenda of higher education as the profitable production of false hope, a cynical form of "credit baiting without infrastructural involvement (Spivak, *Critique* 220)", with the aim of producing the indebted student who will be inculcated with the "fear of falling", and inducted into realm "stress, worry and pressure" as the normative mode of life (Williams 96). As Harris describes the scam, "the most indebted generation in history is without the dependable jobs it needs to escape debt." It should not come as any surprise that the growth in participation of women, people of colour and the working classes in the student body has occurred at a time when that participation has been turned from a publicly-funded asset to a mechanism to enslavement in debt; nor should it be surprising that the white males overwhelmingly in charge of this transformation siphon substantial salaries from this debt, owing to the qualifications they received on the public purse decades ago. No doubt any collapse in the higher education bubble will see the financialised university bailed out with the kinds of executive compensation we witnessed for the financial services industry, and it goes without saying that bail-outs of student debt are unlikely to follow.

The heat of this bubble is why the contemporary university is described as being in crisis. The cynical managerialism of government is matched by a certain delegitimation of the university in the eyes of the public, augmented by the dissipation in the market value of university qualifications. While the useless nature of humanities scholarship has been critiqued for as long as the university has existed, the last two decades have seen substantial and widespread revolt against both the value of university teaching (Arum and Roksa) and scientific knowledge, perhaps most remarkably on the issue of climate change. The specialist expertise of the scientist is no longer seen as the authoritative source of the inexorable advancement of knowledge; or perhaps it might be more truthful to say that once scientific enquiry no longer functioned with the rhetorical promise of limitless economic and technological advancement, many no longer sought its authority. Of course, there are many for whom it was never a convincing saviour in the first place. The circulation of information in the postcolonial era makes visible cracks in the inevitable telos of Western university knowledge's superiority over "less advanced" others; and where such neocolonial dynamics are still in play they appear to be secured less by discursive moral force generated by experimental resolution of the secrets of the universe; rather, they are secured through the brute force of financialisation and capital accumulation, backed up with military and ideological support where necessary. While the European model of the university continues to spread, few new institutions outside Europe would give the ideals of a Cardinal Newman or Kant or Humboldt precedence over the development of human capital and intellectual property promised by neo-liberal technoscience. However, Mary Poovey points out that this entire logic can be subverted, and this logic appears to be the target of many global occupations of the university:

> The means/ends logic of the market is tautological because, by measuring means solely by their ability to achieve the end the market defines in advance, it undermines the credibility of any alternative definition of value. The only argument that is theoretically robust enough to counter the self-confirming logic of this tautology is an argument

Barricades in the library basement at Auckland

but a tendency, has not yet completed its game. If we look to the UK, where student fees have now risen to £9,000 per year and state funding for anything but the most narrowly conceived technosciences has been cut almost completely, then we can see one vision of the future. University administrators surely mean well when they seek to increase funding for the university, although when they complain that their hands are tied by the government this complaint seems to be motivated by a will to unleash the pure and relentless logic of capital on us all. This goes well beyond attempts to tamper with conditions in the collective contract, as it involves a fundamental realignment of priorities and the categories though which we evaluate those priorities.

I returned to the University of Auckland earlier this year after a dozen years in Europe, and have been again and again impressed by the ability, vitality and commitment of the student body. I hear the frustration of students, not merely about their debts, but about restrictions on content, the lack of space for critical interchange and beyond this their concern about the lack of participation in the governance of the university. I can also see what students promise. We could all walk out, whether to make a killing in the city, to head abroad with no intention of returning, or to establish a university elsewhere based on entirely different premises and principles. Such are options to us all. For my part, I propose that we stay, and we make this the kind of place that we collectively want it to be, for us and for future generations.

1. Jacques Derrida, 'The university without condition' in *Without Alibi*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 202.
2. Derrida, ibid., p. 204.

CHRONOLOGY OF STUDENT OCCUPATION IN NEW ZEALAND

Compiled by Robin Murphy, undergraduate Fine Arts and postgraduate Art History student at Auckland University

1971 – 2,000 students occupy Otago University to protest draconian disciplinary processes.
1972 – Victoria University students threaten to occupy over library hours cuts.
1983 – Māori students occupy the University of Auckland fighting for a marae on campus.
13-20 August 1996 – 500 students at Otago University occupy the registry for eight days to protest proposed fee rises for 1997. As a result of negotiations proposed fee rises of over 25% are dropped.
16-23 September 1996 – 150 students at the University of Auckland occupy the registry building following a rally of 400 students led by the Education Action Group targeting the university's fee-setting meeting. As a result the meeting is deferred and the university concedes to negotiate with students over fee rises – eventually dropping from the proposed 24% down to 15.8%
4 October 1996 – 40-50 students occupy the registry office at Massey University to protest fee rises. The day after being evicted by police they re-occupy. As a result, fee rises drop from 21% down to 16%. In the following days smaller occupations are also staged at Victoria University, Northland Polytechnic and the Auckland College of Education.
14 July 1998 – Massy University students occupy the Albany campus' registry office to protest fee rises.
5-7 October 1999 - 200 students at University of Canterbury occupy the registry building following a protest of 3,000 students against proposed fee increases of up to 45% for some students. Negotiations resulted in fees being frozen between 2000 and 2001.
7 October 1999 - 100 students occupy Victoria University of Wellington's registry overnight in solidarity with Canterbury students, to protest their own fee rises and to support the upcoming strike by university staff to protest wage freezes.
12 October 1999 - 50 students occupy the University of Auckland's registry office. 5000 students sign a petition in supporting the occupation and its demands.
29 March 2000 – 70 students at Waikato University in Hamilton occupy the university's registry for 4-5 days. A smaller occupation is staged at Canterbury and one is attempted at Victoria.
8 October 2003 - 60 students at Massey University occupy the registry office in protest of fee rises. After minimal negotiations police arrest up to 10 students.
27-28 February 2008 – students at Canterbury University occupy the university's courtyard to protest restructuring of the university which would close 2 departments.
14 September 2011 - Students at Victoria University of Wellington push through security in the Hunter Building to deliver a letter to the Vice Chancellor expressing their concern at funding cuts, course cuts and unfair staff dismissals. 40-60 students at the University of Auckland occupy the library basement for several hours following a teach-in. Students choose to leave peacefully but despite this three arrests are made.
If you have anything to add or amend, email wearetheuniversitypublication@gmail.com

bailouts of financial enterprises internationally. Neo-liberal interventions no longer see the economic world as a distinct zone of activity separate from social or religious activities: economics comes to be defined in the 1930s as "the science of human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have mutually exclusive uses" (Foucault 222). Foucault notes that economics is no longer the logic of these processes that are taken as given, but analysis of the "strategic programming of individuals' activity" within this world-view.

There is an anthropology at work here, an identifiably Christian-heritage, individualist view of the human that Foucault sees emerging in the behaviourism of psychologists such as Skinner, and which would be later reflected in the extension of economics by Becker to even non-rational or sub-rational activity. Economics would then become the über-social science; the sole means and measure of humanity. Neo-liberal *homo œconomicus* is not a partner in exchange with another individual when visiting a neutral public market. As Foucault notes, "the stake in all [neo]-liberal analyses is the replacement every time of *homo œconomicus* as partner of exchange with a homo œconomicus as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings' (226). He (and it is a "he" that is theorised) becomes ceaselessly productive, rather than consumptive: in consumption, according to Becker, he simply "produces his own satisfaction" (Foucault 226). It is a lonely life. With Becker comes the extension of market logic to all spheres of human activity: the market becomes a "grid of intelligibility", decomposing the traditional governmental concepts of virtue, ethics, morality, or any kind of public benefit or public domain. Instead, the principle of maximum economy will require the development of human capital (biopower) for the "greater good" (Tribe 694). The enterprising self should "naturally" maximise its own production for its own purposes. But because the self responds to the environment, the participation of populations in the market game can and should be stimulated for maximum output. Yet conforming to this version of individuality will involve the "adoption of a 'lifestyle', a 'way of being', a moral choice, a 'mode of relating to oneself, to time, to one's environment, to the future, the group, the family' (Lazzarato 121). To achieve economies of scale, the market-based individual must be created through what Stiegler calls the synchronisation of modes of life (85), rather than these modes being allowed to develop in their own unproductive individualised difference. As Wendy Brown describes the neo-liberal paradigm, individual freedom is thus produced as a *mechanism of government* rather than in resistance to it, and the consequences of this freedom are morally valorised.

In the 20th century the rationale for investment in universities has moved from cultural development; through the redeployment of soldiers and production of an elite managerial class; to enhanced economic production and reduction in youth unemployment (Nybom 75). The social good becomes progressively individualised as access expands - in Perkin's terms leading European countries upped the participation rate of the student age group dramatically from under 10% in 1960 to 50% or more by 2000 —in the UK this went from 9% to 60% over the forty year period (192). In the wake of decreased public funding, massively increased participation, and chronic unemployment and underemployment, we

international monetary policy (locally see Jane Kelsey). However, as important as such issues are, Foucault's historical analysis of neo-liberalism is specifically useful in analysing a governmentality which shapes university life on two levels, that McNay summarises as i) "regulatory or massification techniques" to manage populations, and ii) co-constituting "individualising, disciplinary mechanisms" that regulate behaviour (57). Foucault's late 1970s lectures at the Collège de France situate the specific philosophy of 20th century German and US neo-liberalism in relation to liberal European thought.

The classical liberalism of the 18th century that could be seen to underpin the development of the modern university relied on a capitalist concept of freedom embodied in a civil society which sought to trade outside the control of the state. A Protestant logic of secularisation moves the structure of civic values from the public/religious into the private sphere, reflected in Adam Smith's famous figure of the "invisible hand" of the market. For economic liberalism in Smith's tradition, the idea that the state can or should attempt to achieve particular market outcomes would be as counter-productive as trying to understand God's natural design. Instead, government should maintain a blindness and neutrality to the actual objectives of economic governing, and support the underpinnings of the market economy that will "inevitably" lead to the most efficient distribution of resources. Ironically, such inevitability must be taken on faith (Foucault 16, 32). However, we see in neo-liberal theory the development of an entirely new rationale for government management of the economy and its goals for the post-1960s university. If the modern "liberal" version of the university brought about the "professional" academic who inhabited the university bureaucracy with expertise; neo-liberal ideology has shifted to what Olssen and Peters call a "consumer-managerial" model of accountability, based on quantifiable output measures for the university's new task of human capital development (328).

For the German ordoliberals (Böhm, Eucken, Grossmann-Doerth) of the 1930s-50s and the neo-liberals of the United States (Simons, Schultz, Becker, Hayek, Friedman et.al), liberalism left too much to chance. The experiences of the German state under National Socialism had shown that merely letting capitalism do its work would not necessarily result in an increasingly free market: the market game of exchange could come to wither under state control. Therefore, to these thinkers, the principles of competition underpinning effective markets should be advanced in a "positive" way, markets must be produced through active policy, rather than simply being allowed or facilitated. It would become the responsibility of government to produce the truth of the market, and at the same time the market will constitute "the general index in which one must place the rule for defining all governmental action" (Foucault 121). The formal rigour of competition should be supported by an appropriate regulatory framework: one which does not act on any direct economic facts or toward social outcomes (particularly not "equality"), but instead to support the "environmental factors" that allow competition to flourish. In neo-liberal doctrine, market logic itself must not be directly altered, but must be taken on faith in light of the many documented failings of state intervention (meanwhile, the documented failings of capitalism are merely opportunities for improvement). Most of all, interventions should work to "keep players in the market game," a sentiment vividly reflected in the recent government

NATIONWIDE DAY OF STUDENT ACTION

RALLY

STOP ATTACKS ON STUDENTS

The ACT party's 'Voluntary Student Membership' bill will destroy student unions and services nationwide. Stop the bill before it passes on Wednesday 28 September.

STOP ATTACKS ON STAFF

Vice Chancellor Stuart McCutcheon is trying to remove key working conditions from union agreements. Democratise the university and stop the corporatisation of education.

FULLY FUND EDUCATION

Students are burdened with tens of thousands of dollars of debt by the time they graduate. Cancel the debt, fully fund education and make student allowances universal.

1PM MONDAY 26 SEPTEMBER

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND QUAD

THE SANCTITY OF THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE FINDS ITS HOME IN THE UNIVERSITY

Thomas Dykes, postgraduate Sociology student at Auckland University

The university is sacred, a site dedicated to the stimulation of creative imaginations, the fostering of original ideas and flows of information. It is a site for the contestation of ideas and information, pure thought that speaks to power. The university has a vital role to play toward the formulation of radicalism and acts as site where radicalism is propagated and disseminated. The university is foremost a political site, for it is the precise place where the interpretation of the void acts as a primary premise. It does not seek to justify existing structures rather it is the site of the contestation of the structures and the home of determinate negation, performing the task of critique with constructive purpose to ameliorate society of its injustices and ills. The university seeks to provide the intellectual tools for growth and expansion of knowledge toward emancipation. The university is an open and inclusive site where democracy and equality are fundamentally explored. The university is free.

Image by Owen Connors, undergraduate student at Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland University

NEO-LIBERAL AND FUTURE UNIVERSITIES

Danny Butt, lecturer at Elam School of Fine Arts and PhD candidate at Melbourne University

"The neo-liberal quantification of university inputs and outputs, indexed to credit hours, rankings, productivity, and—most of all—debt, becomes a regime that aims to bond students' personal aspirations and growth to the demands of the market. But other types of value are possible ... They must instead be enacted immediately, in our relations with each other, so that new forms of collective value can be discovered outside the coercive principles of competition and productivity."

What is a university for? For the German tradition of research and specialist knowledge that underpins the U.S.-descended graduate school, it would be the production of *Bildung*, "to develop all possible capacities and to represent the universal in each individual" through the integration of research and learning toward a national culture (Ricken 489). For the French-English college model that underpins undergraduate education, the university is the cultivation of the intellect through Cardinal Newman's liberal education, where the development of a life of the mind is "not useful in any low, mechanical, mercantile sense", but in a "true and high sense as a blessing, or a gift, or power, or treasure that will be shared with the world" (88). Both Humboldt and Newman's ideas of the university appear naive and romantic as we approach the 50th anniversary of the publication of the third canonical statement on the modern university, University of California president Clark Kerr's *The Uses of the University,* which defined the contemporary higher educational institution as a "multiversity." Rather than defending a single ideal and seeking social allies for its institutional expression, the multiple-mission multiversity would serve the many needs of techno-capitalist democracy, though they would not be served in the same way. For the historical "idea" of a university, Kerr substituted a "model" that reflected neo-liberal rationality.
As Ashby describes it, where once the University was cultivated as a garden flower, of no more significance to the prince or bishop than the court musician; the modern university is expected to be a yield-bearing crop (8). For Readings, this productivity requires that the university no longer conforms to an idea of culture, but to an idea of excellence: "There is no 'common reader' in a regime of excellence, since everyone can be excellent in their own way" (104). The university is "dereferentialised" and contentless—the key principle for Kerr was "internal differentiation" by sector, campus, department, programme, institute, laboratory, "in sum, a bewilderingly complex organization" (Rothblatt 184). Viewed through a political-economic lens, what is striking about the transformations of the last half-century is their conformance with the tenets of neo-liberal economic agendas.

Flew notes the unfortunate tendency for neo-liberalism to be used as a catch-all term for capitalism, and most critiques of neo-liberalism concentrate on globalisation and

THE UNIVERSITY'S SILENCES

Miri Davidson, postgraduate Anthropology student at Auckland University

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu argues that power lies in things that 'go without saying because, being axiomatic, they come without saying' (Comaroff 1997).

The creeping neoliberalisation of Auckland university has, to a large extent, gone without saying. But the We Are The University movement is attempting to open up discussion in a wider forum than ever before around the fundamental shifts in the university's structure, purpose and self-image.

When the government claims that universities must do more to 'meet the needs of the economy', what's gone without saying is that the university has a responsibility to the economy in the first place. That the foundational principle of the university as 'critic and conscience' of society has been slipping away, unnoticed, in favour of a new one: the university as an arm of the national economy. What's gone without saying, too, is the notion that everything that *can* help the economy has the *duty* to do so. The fact that the university holds huge commercial potential has been conflated with the normative claim that it should use this. But the latter is an ideological decision, not a fact of nature. It is intentional, not inevitable.

When Stuart McCutcheon says that 'the University should be able to determine its own policies, as most organisations do', what's gone without saying is just who the 'University' really is in this sentence. This 'University' McCutcheon talks about is himself and his managers, who can change policies regardless of the opinions of academics, treated merely as 'employees'. It is not, at present, a community of students and academics – and the university's governance structure reflects this. The pay structure makes it laughable. After treating himself to a pay rise equivalent to the entire annual salary of a staff member, McCutcheon is now the third-highest paid public sector employee in New Zealand.

When student loans are defended on the basis of them being interest-free, what has gone without saying is that education is no longer a public good, but a private investment. This contains further fundamental assumptions within it. One is that education is above all about integrating students into society as it stands, by equipping us with the right skills and attitudes to be 'successful citizens of the 21st century'. What it hides is the other possibility, that the university can in fact be a place where alternative visions of society are imagined, and the status quo questioned.

When university is dominated by a discourse of 'excellence', 'quality', and 'best practice' but these terms are strangely empty of meaning, what has gone without saying is that no one is saying anything anymore. The management structures, performance indicators, accountability measures – all rationalities that have travelled from the financial sphere

into some thing quite different – have overtaken the very content of learning, teaching, and research.

And when academic research is measured against uniform sets of indicators, when regimes of standardisation are extending their reach into not just universities or secondary schools but primary schools, what has gone without saying is that judgment has been replaced by measurement, and knowledge by information. What was never said was the way 'learning may manifest itself weeks, years, generations, after teaching, and may manifest itself in forms that do not look like the original at all' (Strathern 2000). What was never said was that we can't measure learning or thinking within a set of preordained standards because a major function of these is, by definition, to find things that we never knew existed.

It is not easy to challenge these ideas, because they come to us through an impenetrable discourse of economic rationality. They present themselves as self-evident. This is why, as Bourdieu continues, power 'lies in what it silences, what it prevents people from thinking and saying, what it puts beyond the limits of the rational and the credible.' Like in the war that is fought on a cost-benefit calculation, precluding any discussion of morality, it is more often than we'd like to admit that we can forget about things like collegiality, and trust, because they lie outside of these discourses.

The We Are The University movement is about much more than fees, or VSM, or supporting academic rights. It is about starting to question the fundamentals of what a university should be. We need to start articulating the problems in new ways, and thinking hard about the meaning and role of this institution. There is nothing neutral or inevitable about the neoliberalisation of the university. We need to make sure this is not something that just never gets said.

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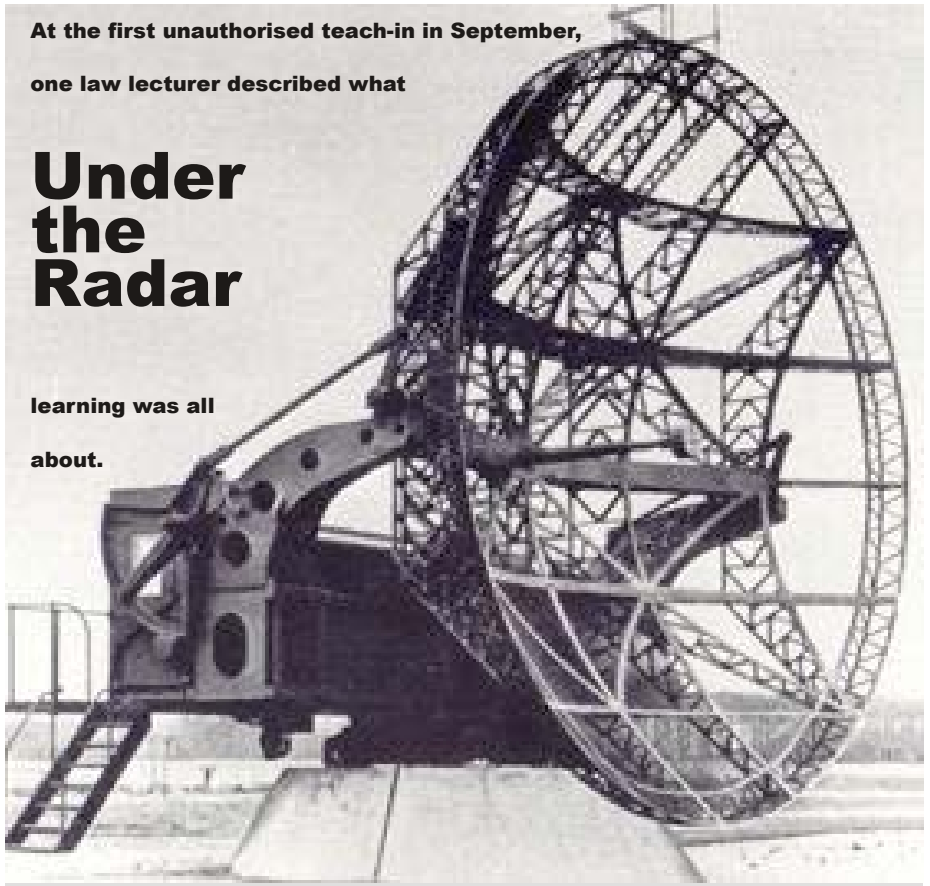
Image by Owen Connors, undergraduate student at Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland University

'But the entry of big business onto the campuses is doing more than turning buildings into advertising billboards. [Former] Auckland vice-chancellor Kit Carson assured corporations that in return for their "donation," the university would provide the "quality graduates" they wanted. Like other universities, Auckland is re-writing its course prescriptions according to the express wishes of big business.'

Grant Brookes and David Colyer

'Students and the Education Factory,' a *Socialist Worker* pamphlet, p.26. http://www.socialistworkerarchive.net.nz/~server/Socialist_Worker_NZ_Archive/Socialist_Workers_Organisation_Pamphlets_files/Education%20factory%20pamphlet.pdf

Student protests at Victoria University, Wellington on 14 September 2011. Images via Salient.



At the first unauthorised teach-in in September, one law lecturer described what

Under the Radar

learning was all about.

"Management has no respect for students. Management makes all the decisions and we play our parts like good little schnooks. Doing as we are told."

"So you are learning a lot of hierarchy at university, under the radar learning."

"What you are also learning about is the normalcy of debt. How many of you are going to graduate with tens of thousands of dollars of debt? How many of you?"

"And that debt load is going to influence virtually every decision you make for the coming years. Can you imagine in the United States that students are graduating with between $150,000 and $200,000 in debt?"

"What is one of the lessons here? Not just about the normalcy of debt, you are learning about discipline and how things are done."

"You borrow money to acquire something that you need. You pay interest upon this and you work a job like a good little worker bee to pay back that debt. Under the radar learning."

Compiled by a History student at Auckland University

CORPORATE KNOWLEDGE

Manon Revuelta, former undergraduate
English student at Auckland University

In May this year, as Vernon Tava returned from the bathrooms to enter the University of Auckland graduation ceremony to claim his degree, he was stopped by a somewhat militant barricade of University staff marshals blocking the entrance to the hall. As he attempted to enter, he was met with a restraining hand on his chest, and a threat to search through the pockets of his gown. While these actions are highly illegal, Tava was well within his rights. Within those pockets was not a bomb, a cellphone, or even a light snack for the anticipated stretch of seated applause. There was only a pile of yellow rosettes, which bore the logo and slogan of the TEU (Tertiary Education Union), asking students and staff to unite. Tava had intended to wear one pinned to his gown as he attended the ceremony, as a sign of support and solidarity. Yet clearly, the senior authorities of the university were so intent on suppressing the voice of this union that they were willing to prevent students from graduating in the process. This was a blatant violation of section 14 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act (1990), which states that "everyone has the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and opinions of any kind in any form." However it also provided a revealing glimpse of a bullying and oppressive ethos currently bubbling behind the University of Auckland's benign exterior of clouds and blue skies. The TEU and their supporters are fully justified in opposing Vice Chancellor Stuart McCutcheon's proposed changes to employee conditions, not only as it diminishes their ability to do their jobs well and to provide a high standard of education, but it aligns the university with a more econometric, capitalistic model.

According to a media release from the TEU,

> The vice chancellor is demanding academics move a number of core conditions that are crucial to academics doing their job out of their collective agreement and into policy, over which they would have no control.

This would mean that rights such as sabbaticals, fair promotion and disciplinary process would be most likely changed according to McCutcheon's aims, as putting them into policy would mean they could be changed without any right to appeal. Academics would have less room to pursue their own projects, working longer hours and having to run their work by authorities. Such working conditions would also detract top overseas academics from the university. In a wider sense, this proposed restructuring represents what Vernon Tava referred to in a recent interview as "an increasing managerialism and corporatization of the university… a Fordist approach… a production-line, turning out the units, very autocratic management style". In other words, by limiting the freedoms of academic workers and imbuing managerial positions with more power, the university becomes increasingly fitted to a knowledge economy. Research is subjected to institutional ownership; knowledge is no longer knowledge in and of itself, but an object which can slot into the network of others in capitalist discourse. It becomes an exchangeable, measurable, and profitable commodity, and is produced accordingly. As Vice Chancellor Stuart McCutcheon writes in his message to the public concerning the University of Auckland:

> Society is changing rapidly in ways which will have a profound impact on the role of universities… In a world where change is the norm, however, one thing is certain - knowledge will be a key resource and will be highly sought after within New Zealand and around the globe.

McCutcheon's message illustrates the understanding of knowledge as a corporatized product, which his proposed changes to academic employee conditions reflect. He refers to knowledge as a 'key resource' as though it were oil or diamonds; a phenomenon to be regulated and mass produced for economic profit.

This capitalistic vision seems to be what tertiary education is evolving into around the world. The recent near tripling of fees in the UK embodies a similar trend. According to the Guardian website, the arts and humanities (less directly profitable and profession-based subjects) will become increasingly inaccessible as a result of the government cuts. With these increases pushing working classes into more corporate, 'profitable' professions such as law, medicine, or business, the arts and humanities will inevitably become an indulgent leisure for the upper classes. As the necessity of subjects is increasingly defined by profitability, such vital subjects will risk losing their place in society.

What we should gravitate towards is a completely different view of knowledge. Philosopher and public intellectual Cornel West provides an important alternative perspective. In a recent interview with Noel McCarthy, West articulated the way he sees his own academic practice as rooted in a calling rather than a need for a job, and his knowledge is therefore his own, to do with as he pleases – it is not the possession of the academic institution. This is an important articulation of the real objectives of academics: they are not cogs in an assembly line, producing pre-designed knowledge for a higher power. They are undertaking their own research projects, investigating within their own fields of knowledge. This is a productive rather than re-productive process; it requires conditions which are conducive to its expansion and freedom rather than regulatory.

Ultimately, whether those conditions can be maintained is a reflection of the objectives and roles of tertiary education. In West's view,

> knowledge does not come in the form of pieces… [it is] couched within a larger wisdom, a wisdom rooted in a love and compassion… driven by a fight for justice for others… we must never confuse education with credentialization. (West, 37)

While it sounds slightly sentimental, it is an example of a perspective which, if adopted, would validate a less corporate university. With this more fluid approach to the nature and purpose of knowledge, academic work (both under-graduate and post-graduate) should not simply be seen as a business transaction, but part of a wider, continuous and open process.

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