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After cultural capitalism*

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NEVER LET A GOOD CRISIS GO TO WASTE

> If modern man's producing power is a thousand times greater than that of the cave-man, why then, in the United States to-day, are there fifteen million people who are not properly sheltered and properly fed? Why then, in the United States to-day, are there three million child laborers? It is a true indictment. The capitalist class has mismanaged. In face of the facts that modern man lives more wretchedly than the cave-man, and that his producing power is a thousand times greater than that of the cave-man, no other conclusion is possible than that the capitalist class has mismanaged, that you have mismanaged, my masters, that you have criminally and selfishly mismanaged.
> (JACK LONDON, *The Iron Heel*)

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In the five seasons of David Simon's HBO television program *The Wire*, we see the dystopic contemporary Baltimore created by the class war from above. It's a city ravaged by 'quality management', the same philosophy that administrations across the country have adopted in shunting the overwhelming majority of college faculty into contingent positions. As *Time* magazine television critic James Poniewozik puts it, 'All The Wire's characters face the same forces in a bottom-line, low-margin society, whether they work for a city department, a corporation or a drug cartel. A pusher, a homicide cop, a teacher, a union steward: they're all, in the world of The Wire, middlemen getting squeezed for every drop of value by the systems they work for'.

What the show grasps is that private corporate and public institutional managers both employ 'quality' in an Orwellian register in which a 'quality process' is one of continuously increasing workload and

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continuously eroding salary and benefits, with a single, doltish mantra employed everywhere--in police departments, in social services, and school systems, just as on college campuses: the perpetual command to 'Do More With Less'.

As Poniewozik observes, what this actually means, 'is doing less with less and cutting corners to make it look like more'. Hence the need for assessment instruments that everyone inside an organisation understands to be trivial and easily spun to nearly any purpose by agile institutional actors. The apparent vapidity of the assessment process is actually its cleverness, at least from the point of view of management as a form of labour under pressure: the instruments are supposed to be easily defeated. The ease with which the metrics of assessment software are spun can be seen as a mode of assisted creativity in the workplace--rather similar to the ways that music and image processing sites assist the creativity of would-be composers, photographers and cartoonists.

In the show, upper management continuously urges lower management to 'be creative' with the numbers, a command that lower management generally passes along to the workforce. This command is correctly and universally understood as helping to devise a metric to assist organisational actors in collaborating in the pretense that more is being done--e.g, in social services, raising the number of citizen contacts or cases resolved per employee--even while everyone in the organisation understands that the actual quality of service is declining. This form of creativity is a survival mode for managers who themselves will be ground under if they refuse the do-or-die command of claiming ever-larger improvements in 'productivity' while papering over the enormous human cost.

The human cost isn't just the immiseration of the workforce. It's also the failure of these intrusively and anti-socially managed institutions, highly productive by questionable metrics, to actually deliver the policing, health care, and education they exist to provide. For instance, the number of individuals in the state of Ohio receiving food assistance doubled between 2001 and 2008, to 1.1 million, but the real story is that another 0.5 million in this one U.S. State are eligible, but not enrolled. (Candisky) Why not? Because the amount of assistance available--less than a thousand dollars a year, with endless applications and assessment--is no longer worth the cost of claiming it for at least a third of the hungry, many of whom are working, but cannot feed themselves on their wages. So there's a metric to support the claims of the bureaucracy ('Here in the food assistance office, we're proud that we're serving twice as many 'customers' at lower cost!'), but both the metric and the claim work as Potemkin villages screening the lived reality beyond, that more and more people need more and more help. Just as schools increasingly 'teach to the test' rather than educate, social service organisations devote more and more energy toward generating misleading statistics that permit the managers of the public sphere to claim they are making progress on issues, even when the opposite is true.

On my campus--like many U.S. employers--a widely touted employee benefit is on-site child care, but our near-two-year-old isn't enrolled, like many in his situation, because the waitlist is so long, and because they don't offer the (developmentally, pedagogically preferred) option of part-time care--meaning that the waitlist de facto prioritises staff and administrators, who generally want full-time care, over faculty, many of whom prefer part-time care.

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Under quality management, the daycare centre doesn't exist to provide child-care to campus employees; it exists to enable *the claim* that 'care is available'. Anyone who has ever hung up on an automated telephone tree or unhelpful call centre employee, not bothered to go to a primary care physician to get authorised to see a specialist, or passed up a workplace benefit, professional reimbursement or consumer rebate because the paperwork was too arduous, understands the chiseling register of 'quality processes': the arduousness and futility of complaining is part of the calculation. So is who gets denied service, as increasingly sophisticated programs for commercial service providers apply zip code and other personal data to calculate denial-of-service algorithms for various demographics based on the likelihood that they'll complain, hire a lawyer, etc, etc. Valuable market demographics are carefully serviced; marginal market demographics are excluded, ignored, or shut down: this is particularly problematic when market and revenue become filters through which we grasp communities and civic systems.

The show underscores the problematics of this management strategy spanning public and private, including the private-in-the-public-good of traditional professions. Closely parallel to the actual organisation, the show's version of the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper fires its experienced reporters and slashes funds to do investigative reporting in favour of fire-chasing and puffery, fleshing out the staff with cheaper, younger, workers, some of whom lack the contacts, experience and moral compass to do the job. All city departments are under similar continuous pressure. At the police department, funds to actually investigate homicide and gang crime have been steadily restricted to the point where only 'high profile' murders receive resources; most victims receive perfunctory attention, and individual investigators are barred from investing time and resources in long-term efforts to bring down criminal organisations. The police department and news organisation alike exist primarily to support management's claims about policing and news-gathering, and steadily less to do actual policing and news-gathering.

In order to shake funds from the system, one homicide investigator gets the idea of faking the evidence in the unrelated murders of homeless men to appear as if they are the actions of a single serial killer. Since there is little market demanding that the murders of the homeless be stopped, and no revenue associated with that market, the investigator is forced to 'act entrepreneurially' to create a market and find the necessary revenue simply to do what one would normally imagine was his job. This plan plays on the interlocking nature of the quality-management values driving public institutions and the privately-owned media with a public-service mission, together with the responsibility-centre resource allocation of the mayor's office. If the newspaper can drum up a market and capture the attention of the mayor, then--and only then--public resources will flow toward the investigation.

When it turns out that plain serial killing is not enough to stir the appetites of the local media market, the detective is forced to up the ante by additional fakery, contriving evidence that suggests a sexual component to the murders. Simultaneously a young reporter under similar pressures at the *Baltimore Sun* also fakes journalistic evidence--acting entrepreneurially to advance himself in the organisation. Together these multiple lies (creative fictions, innovations, entrepreneurship)--composed in the key of money, market, and sensation to which management's antennae are permanently attuned--ultimately result in a successful short-term redescription of the institutional mission of both organisations: get the (nonexistent) serial sex killer! Following that redescription is a modest but meaningful resource flow: cash, equipment, and, above all, labour time.

A significant fraction of those diverted resources are wasted maintaining the illusion that reporters and police officers are following managerial direction and chasing down the fake murderer. The small amount left over is secretly diverted to actual policing--a small cadre of dedicated officers use the funds and control over their time recaptured from management to order test results, do surveillance, acquire computers, and actually make a series of arrests.

Of course the reason that so many persons--nurses, educators, roofers--identify with the police officers in the show is that they too must increasingly engage in lies and risk-taking just to spend their time--often their unpaid overtime--doing the work in which they believe, instead of inflating their bosses' metrics. Time spent teaching and nursing is increasingly stolen from time spent 'proving' the lies of management--that ignorance is knowledge, or that sickness is health. But I don't mean to suggest only the selfishness and folly of management; we must also recognise their breathtaking cleverness: they are at the golf course while on the job, but their subordinates are donating work while off the clock!

'Quality' processes are the Stalinist iteration of late capitalism, through which the class of top functionaries exist in a separate world of servants and second homes while urging everyone else to accept scarcity for love of the mission. It's not just teaching for love--it's policing and soldiering and urban planning for love, game design for love, word processing for love. Quality management takes advantage of the fact that most people don't behave as the self-interested clots modeled by neoliberal economics. Most people are animated by profoundly pro-social impulses. To a limited but real extent, depending on individual factors, janitors do their work for love of clean floors. And it is the overt, cannibalistic intention of quality management to see that--to the absolute limit of the possible--they do that work for love alone.

Only top management ('leadership'), in the quality scheme, isn't done for love. Upper management is paid to do something most of us can't do. Most of us can't live in mansions while our neighbours can't afford chemo; most of us really believe that individual accumulation has reasonable limits. Only a very unusual person can do what the sleaziest small contractor does--pick up day labour, pay them less than the minimum wage to rebuild a suburban kitchen, collect $50,000, and then dump the workers back on the street corner. The task of academic quality management is to find those rare people and make them deans, provosts, and presidents.

TAKING THE AUSTERITY BAIT

When they are given the true picture, every ordinary taxpayer gets it: something's wrong when faculty earn less than bartenders; nobody would trust an accountant earning less than a living wage, etc. During the moment of bailout, American faculty rather sweetly and earnestly hoped that their education 'leaders''would lift the curtain and say, 'Can you sling us some cash for faculty and students? We'd like to charge less tuition and pay our faculty at least as well as, say, flight attendants'.

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That didn't happen. Education leaders didn't demand a 'bailout' or a 'new New Deal for higher ed', etc. They did eventually request, and receive, money to continue their four-decade spending spree on buildings and grounds. With respect to students and faculty, though, they seemed all too ready with even more grandiose plans for austerity.

That's because administrations have found four decades of austerity useful to establish greater 'productivity' (more work for less pay) and more 'responsiveness to mission', which is to say, more control over curriculum, research, and every dimension of teaching, from class size to pedagogy.

They anticipate the coming years will be even more of an opportunity in this respect. In addition to massive world-historical spending on the military, police, and prison sectors, the diversion of public funds to the financial and industrial sector gives the rhetoric and tactics of austerity a needed shot in the arm: just when we were about to stop falling for the 'oh, this year it's austerity again' rhetoric and demand restoration of public funds to a public good, we have the whole government standing in front of flags with their empty pockets turned out.

That's right: many top administrators *welcome* austerity. It's what they know how to do; it's their whole culture, the reason for their existence, the justification for their salary and perks, the core criteria for their bonuses: the quality way, 5% or 10% cheaper (or 5-10% more entrepreneurial revenue) every year. 'Ya gotta be a good earner or pay the price', as quality-manager Tony Soprano liked to say. Not to put too fine a point on it, they're sweating the serfs in a pretty old-fashioned way: I don't care how ya do it, ya gotta get me another 10% next year, or you can 'choose' whether you teach more classes or close your department. And top U.S. education administrators, whacking down $300, 000 a year or more, get plenty of traditionally seigneurial rewards: box seats at the jousting, the best cuts of the roast animal, jets and suites for their trysts.

Those of us on the ground in higher education will wonder how much more 'productivity' is in fact possible, given that leaders have been taking advantage of the rhetoric of crisis for forty years to ratchet productivity beyond any previous administrative dream--U.S. faculty today teach more students more cheaply than at any point in the history of higher education. This is not a partisan political issue, as I've said before, Clinton and Gore via 'quality in governance' are just as responsible for 'increasing productivity' (but gutting education) by permatemping and extracting donated labour via service learning and interns (make your own joke here) and the like. (Gore is the author of one of the early treatises on quality in governance, and it was his antics at an Arkansas quality in government conference that generated one of the early sexual harassment charges against then-governor Bill Clinton).

What's all that quality management meant for higher education in Gore's home state? Nothing to be proud of, really. Over the past couple of decades, the great state of Tennessee has burned millions of education dollars on executive compensation, sports facilities, and miles of orange carpet--all while 'successfully' keeping its faculty among the lowest-paid in the country. Not surprisingly, Tennessee students have done poorly in close relation to management's success at squeezing the faculty. And all of this was long before the chancellor of the Tennessee Board of Regents, Charlie Manning, came up with a 'new business model' for higher ed in his Appalachian state.

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Of course the 'new' business model isn't new at all, it's just Manning refusing to let a good crisis go to waste. It's the same tired Toyota-management theory from the 80s, with wide-eyed managers and credulous politicians swapping bromides (crisis=danger + opportunity) of doubtful validity, linguistic or otherwise. In the big picture of capital, Manning is just a low-level squeezer--the higher-ed equivalent of a regional manager for PepsiCo. With bailout, the first half of the 'opportunity' for higher-level squeezers and shareholders has already been realised, in the stabilisation of finance-industry holdings and incomes. Manning's job is to realise the other half of the opportunity--squeezing a few more nickels and dimes out of his already-on-food-stamps faculty, and further watering down the thin gruel he passes off as 'higher education'.

In the business curriculum, squeezing nickels and dimes until your workers are living on food stamps, loans, or gifts from relatives is called 'long term productivity enhancement'. Manning's ideas for good squeezing include:

- requiring students to take a certain number of online courses en route to their bachelor's and associate's degrees;
- turning online learning into an entirely automated experience 'with no direct support from a faculty member except oversight of testing and grading', and providing financial incentives for students to voluntarily accept teacherless education-as-testing;
- use even more adjuncts and convert the remaining tenure-stream faculty into their direct supervisors, 'formalising' that arrangement;
- use 'advanced students' to teach 'beginning students' and build that requirement into curriculum and financial aid packages;
- increase faculty workload, initiating a 'students-taught' metric to supersede courseload, and 'revise' summer compensation;
- austerity for the poor--cutting athletics at community colleges, etc--but rewards for privatisation and revenue-producing programs, etc.

Reading all this life-in-wartime austerity of fake correspondence learning, students as teachers, faculty as supervisors, and a standing army of temps, you'd think there was actual fat to be trimmed (other than in the administration).

But the reality is that if you're really experienced and qualified, teaching 10 courses a year for Chuck Manning nets you about $15,000 without benefits, or less than you'd make at Wal-mart. That's quite a bit less than half the $33,960 that the extremely useful Living Wage Calculator says is necessary to support one adult and one child in Knox County.

Republicans and Democrats share the wrong idea that four decades of squeezing the faculty has been to 'control costs', when in fact it's just been to accumulate pots of either money (to spend on administrator perks, salaries, and sponsored projects or favoured activities, especially big-time sports or, at religious institutions, social engineering) or capital (buildings, endowments, media infrastructure, investment in ventures and partnerships).

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HOW THE UNIVERSITY ACCUMULATES

As anyone who's attended a faculty meeting in the past two decades will have observed: higher education is a lead 'innovator' of the lousy forms of employment that have gutted the economy--permatemping of the faculty, outsourcing the staff, and myriad ways of extracting un- and under-compensated labour from students: internships, assistantships, financial aid, partnerships with local employers, service learning, etc. As I've argued elsewhere, this savage harvest of value is the envy of most other employers.

One of Obama's favourite young economic advisors, Jason Furman, likes to note that Wal-mart amasses a miserly average $6,000 in profits annually per worker (a number that is about average in the retail sector and less than the $9,000 average earnings per worker in the corporate sector) (McCormack).

Wouldn't it be interesting to calculate the rate of accumulation per employee in higher education?

That would be complicated, because university accumulation takes place in so many different ways--sure, you can add up endowments and guess at the value of medical buildings and hotels--but how do you value the accumulation of basic research, cultural production, vocational training and the reproduction of social relations? We do know that during the Bush years, for-profit education organisations were consistently in the top tier of profitability--precisely because they capture as profit the accumulation that the non-profits divert to other purposes. In 2006, Goldman Sachs and another investor bought one commercial education vendor enrolling just 72,000 students for over $3.4 billion dollars ($47,000 per student). Let's conservatively assume that this price indicates a goal of returning 9-10% annually on that investment, or $4,500 a student, then project that figure against the nationwide ratio of full-time equivalent students to full-time equivalent staff (around 5 to 1) and then: et voila, for-profit higher ed would at least one perspective have the potential for accumulating a staggering $24,000 per employee. In point of fact the vendor, Education Management Corporation (owner of Argosy, 41 Art Institutes, and the Western State University College of Law) has a much higher than average student to staff ratio of 8 or 9 to 1, possibly indicating that they are hoping to collect almost $50,000 annually per employee!

Right now, EMC has more employees, but assuming the same student-staff ratio in 2006 that it has today, it would have had about 8,500 employees when Goldman bought it, paying about $400,000 per staffer. According to their June 2009 financial statement, EMC earned $319 million before interest and taxes on 16,000 employees--or an average of $20,000 per employee, even though most are part time. The full adjusted EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation) was quite a bit higher: $430 million, or $27,000 per person on a largely part-time workforce, which would suggest fiscal 2009 earnings in excess of $40,000 per full-time-equivalent employee. (As I was writing this, and delivering a lecture in Pittsburgh-based EMC's home state of Pennsylvania, the corporation issued an initial public stock offering, or IPO, easily wiping out almost $400 million in debt, and announced that 3rd quarter 2009 revenues had soared well past the half-billion mark, riding a 22% increase in student enrolment, including a 60% increase in online enrolment (see 'EMC Reports Fiscal 2010 Results').

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Of course proper calculation of the 'profitability' of nonprofits would acknowledge that the nonprofits accumulate in at least three major ways: traditional forms of **capital** (buildings, golf courses, endowments), **human, social, and cultural value** (often described as human, social and cultural 'capital': workers, professionals, scientific knowledge, culture, the reproduction of social relations essential to the survival of capitalism, etc.), and **money**--revenue that in a commercial education vendor might be distributed to shareholders as profit, but in a nonprofit is spent on things that management and powerful campus or community actors want, such as research, community service, sports teams, religious or cultural activities, and so on. Obviously, a more sophisticated approach would look at the profits of commercial 'education vendors' as in clear ways related to the non-accumulation of these potential profits--there's a clearly parasitical relationship between the actual harvest of profit in the commercial sector and the largely monetisable-but-not-monetised stream of basic research, curricula, cultural activity, professional service and so on still flowing from the majority not-for-profit sector.

Wal-mart's full EBITDA approaches $30 billion annually, but using Furman's numbers, Wal-mart accumulates around $10 billion in profits annually on 1.3 to 1.6 million U.S. Employees.

As of Fall 2007, the 5,000 institutions of higher education in the United States employed 3.5 million people (2.7 million full-time equivalent): to beat Wal-mart's per-employee harvest of value the U.S. higher-education sector would have had to accumulate just $21 billion that year against Furman's measure, or a little over $60 billion against the EBITDA metric.

While I can't pretend to calculate the actual accumulation of college employers, I can share my opinion that it's no contest.

Over the past ten years on average, including the crash, average endowment growth alone has grown more than $25 billion annually, or $7,100/employee, and $9,500 per full-time equivalent employee). In terms of fixed capital: in 2007 U.S. campuses spent almost $13 billion on construction. In 2008, they spent $18 billion representing $5,400/employee, $7,100 per FTE employee (Agron). In 2005-2006 U.S. public and private universities together spent $37 billion on research ($13,700 per FTE employee) $29 billion on hospitals ($10,700 per FTE employee), $12 billion on public service ($4,400 per FTE employee) and $28 billion on 'auxiliary enterprises'($10,400 per FTE employee) (NCES Digest 2008). Excluding the hospital expenses and leaving out the obviously handsome profits of the for-profit sector, U.S. campuses are currently accumulating around $10,000 per FTE employee in endowment growth, spending about $7,000 per FTE employee on new construction and allocating over $28,000 per FTE employee to research, public service and 'auxiliary enterprises'.

Again, I don't pretend that these calculations are useful as anything more than a spur to thought, perhaps jump-starting some further thinking along these lines. But it seems reasonable at least to test the idea that U.S. higher education is harvesting five, ten, even twenty times more value per employee than Wal-mart--and if there's any truth to such an assertion, wondering what that means for students, staff and faculty: does higher education accomplish such an eye-popping harvest of value by an intensification of Wal-mart's methods, or by other methods entirely? If we are unimpressed with claims by Wal-mart and its apologists that the $6,000 per worker is bal-

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anced by two or three thousand in savings by shopping there, should we be equally unimpressed by the claims of universities that their ruthless harvest of value is in the public good?

And: if we've sometimes given Wal-mart credit for reorganising the economy--quality-managing its suppliers as ruthlessly as its staff--are there not ways in which the larger and even-more-impressively ruthless higher education sector deserves a share of the credit for large-scale, even global, economic reorganisation?

Moreover, shouldn't we be asking *why* the university accumulates, and for whom? And whether the different modes of accumulation might be at cross-purposes--that is, whether the accumulation in buildings and grounds (say, business centres) is at odds with social accumulation? Of course it's obvious that higher education is really vastly unlike Wal-mart: it not only can and does accumulate in traditional forms massively in excess of Wal-mart, its powers to accumulate in other ways is simply off Wal-mart's radar and beyond Wal-mart's horizon. At the very least, therefore, it should be clear that the university does not need to accumulate in the chiseling way of Wal-mart if, as Jason Furman suggests, Wal-mart's margin is so thin it couldn't change compensation without becoming something itself--that's simply not the case for the university. If it's true, as most evidence suggests, that working and owing less, and spending more time with better-educated, more professional and more secure faculty is associated with better learning, then we may have to conclude that the university's rush to accumulate in the mode of Wal-mart, however impressive the billions piled up, is misguided at best.

Sure, it's nice to have fresh paint on the classrooms and gyms with the latest equipment--but what if each treadmill with a television represents a couple of disadvantaged students who failed to persist?
It's fairly clear that the university under quality management accumulates steadily more undemocratically, with greater and greater benefits directly to the investor class, who sip cocktails in the box seats at college sporting events and plan their raids on workers' pension plans in conferences at university hotels, while university administrators huddle with their subordinates, finding ways for the taxpayer to shoulder the cost of job training. Another way of looking at these soaring benefits to the investor class is as a fairly direct upward transfer, with the most disadvantaged required to subsidise these benefits with debt, tuition, donated service and under-waged labor, not to mention their usefully legitimating loyalty and enthusiasm--as well as with their failure, since in the United States most of the most disadvantaged who encounter higher education are spat out as waste.

You'll notice I haven't even tried to estimate the cash value of what most of us would call the real productivity of higher education--knowledge, culture, social reproduction and social change, human development. Those numbers are literally incalculable; trying to do it would amount to a publicity stunt, like trying to guess the cash value of love or all the oxygen in the atmosphere.

Still we can illustrate. Leaving the obvious out of it, such as basic scientific research and job training, the cash valuation even of relatively incidental forms of academic social productivity dwarfs our friends at Wal-mart. Let's take the example of philanthropic giving: even after the crash, 2008 U.S. philanthropic giving was estimated at $300 billion (Hrwyna). It is hard to extricate the perva-

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sive influence of higher education through most sectors of that distribution. For instance: giving in the education sector, which includes libraries, literacy programs, and prep schools as well as all kinds of higher education, including community colleges, was around $40 billion. Campus employees pervasively influenced giving patterns to libraries and literacy programs in addition to the funds aimed directly at their employers. For that matter, university faculty, staff and administrators play a major role in directing the flow to arts and humanities organisations ($13 billion), as well as organisations addressing health, environment, human services, and international affairs ($65 billion). They play some role in generating and directing part of the over $100 billion in religious giving.

Conservatively assigning the generation and direction of even 15% of the overall philanthropic flow to the activities of campus employees--as in part sort of a spin-off of their primary monetisable-but-not-monetised activities in knowledge, culture, and social reproduction--would amount to quadruple Wal-mart's profits.

Of course, the capturing of philanthropic flows is partly but not exclusively a matter of capturing value harvested elsewhere--in the steel plants of China, the oil sands of Alberta, call centers in Mumbai. (And of course we've long raised questions about the usefulness of 'right here' and 'over there' in thinking about value). Still there is an atavistic tendency to view the work of capturing that value simplistically, as a struggle among the privileged passing through the university-cum-country-club to direct the surplus, with the 'working class' in hard hats and the 'professional-managerial class' coming off as sharks battling over bloody chunks of capital casually tossed by the yachting class. That lens may have been useful in the United States in the 1960s, with relative stability in the professions and a much less prominent role for managers in complex organisations (commercial and otherwise). But it fails to grasp the most significant trends in the PMC, if there ever was such a thing, toward a fracture of interest between many professionals and managers, toward the proletarianisation of professionals and the increasing professionalism of top managers.

Further, as I hope to make clear, while the university is certainly home to many such sharks engaged in this kind of pursuit, the university's role in harvest and capture is much larger, and has a great deal to do with its crucial role in the labour process. That is: it's not just a matter of directing the surplus--it's a matter of generating it by un- and under-compensated labour, much of it freely given, or nearly donated, quite a bit extracted by administrative cleverness, and a huge rafts of value simply extorted.

THE FIGURE OF THE STUDENT: SUPER-EXPLOITATION AND BEYOND

The student is the most complex node in the university value chain, simultaneously customer and servant, subject of spectacle and object of surveillance, citizen and thug, worker and manager, present donor of labour time and future donor of capital, agent of change and prey. To wrap up my contribution for this number of the journal, I'd like to explore some of the commonalities between Stefano Harney's contribution in this issue and my own views. Especially important to his meditation 'In the Business School' is his focus on the undergraduate student as something more than the incidentally-embodied subject of the business curriculum, as in fact embodied labour

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engaged in self-warehousing and debt accumulation, 'ready to work but not causing trouble,' poised for the summons (keystroke, text message) of capital.

In focusing on the undergraduate business student, Harney grips the back of our necks while we try to wriggle away from the evidence of our own eyes: during the decades that the traditional professions, especially our own, have been gutted, the undergraduate business curriculum has captured a third (U.S.) or more (U.K.) of students. 'Now interestingly', he notes, these students irritate other academics in their 'open identification with wage slavery', that is, 'precisely in the moments when these students know themselves as labour, when they want to know only how to be employed'. As Harney devastatingly notes, anyone seriously on the Left has to acknowledge these moments as an opportunity to 'have a conversation in the university about what it means to hire yourself out to capital'.

There are lots of ways to go forward from this crucial observation: what sort of opportunity? What sort of conversation? Harney focuses on the changing nature of the struggle over creativity and craft: 'not the old struggle around the commodification of art which now appears almost quaint, but the struggle to resist every act of creativity being already and immediately also capitalist work'. There are many fronts in that struggle--the capitalist management of scholarly curiousity, the calling up of creativity by setting performance targets ('I don't care how ya do it, just get me 10% more!'), etc--but the one that interests Harney is the notion of 'study' as a line of flight from the general equivalent, the collective act of 'learning not geared to an outcome'. In short, Harney is pointing to the business school as something more than the clubhouse of capitalist tools--as a site of labour, or one contradictory, therefore rich with potential, place on the great factory floor of contemporary production; saying that we need to acknowledge that business students can and do engage in study, or learning unfettered by outcomes management and that the contemporary managerial obsession with culture, craft, eccentricity, and creativity is a special opportunity in that regard.

Another way of moving forward is considering the actually existing business student as not merely warehoused labour and a future source of value, but as already a worker, already an active node of accumulation. As I've already discussed in *How The University Works*, the most straightforward expression of campus 'innovation' in the labour process is the bonanza of value harvested from un- and under-compensated student and labour by both campuses and private employers. Throughout the U.S. economy, un- and under- compensated student labour has been aggressively substituted for permanent waged positions with benefits. That's millions of real jobs, cut into pieces and parceled out as low-wage positions for students, many of whom take on between two and five 'part-time' positions annually in order to minimise the debt that they'd otherwise incur. In the United States, 80% of college students work an average of 30 hours a week, triple the figure most studies say is appropriate for optimal learning. This workload bears directly on absurdly low persistence and graduation rates.

This is a perspective complementary to Harney's and I think largely compatible with it: in the U.S., think of the undergraduate business students who not only don't become Trump and Gates, or even vice presidents, but who never complete degrees at all. And of course waged employment-

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-simple exploitation--and donated or extorted labour--super exploitation--is hardly the only way in which students contribute value to the campus and to private employers.

In 'Take Your Ritalin and Shut Up', an essay for *South Atlantic Quarterly* that should appear about the same time as this number of Edu-Factory, I've been trying to work out the relationship between notions of academic freedom for students and the political, social and institutional engineering of undergraduate cultures through Standards-Based Education Reform, the medicalisation of youth, and vocationalisation of curriculum, among other pressure points. I certainly didn't give the business curriculum an entirely fair shake in that piece, but I did use freedom in a curricular sense rather similar to Stefano's invocation of study, asking essentially, in what sense could we understand the hoopla about David Horowitz's academic 'bill of rights' for students as a fake solution to a real problem? Is there a way in which the outcomes-management of their existences essentially means that students' academic freedoms--including what Stefano calls 'study'--are substantially foreclosed in advance?

Part of my point is that this is a system that works almost as poorly for its 'winners' as its many losers, and that the reason the system works so poorly for its winners is the relentless extraction of value in administrative innovation:

> 'The lesson of their own internships, service learning and community service/resume building--the lesson of contemporary campus culture itself--is that good managers find ways for workers to work for free, and organize the production process to incorporate as many self-discounting and unpaid workers as possible. They themselves have accepted the command to give it away for years--and it all worked out for them, didn't it? To the winners, giving one's labor away is a form of 'investment' in one's own future--a period of subordination, humiliation and obedience similar to the character-building of bildungsroman--that one endures as part of one's initiation into the leadership class'.

In certain circumstances this investment--giving it away--quite literally takes the form of a lottery ticket to success in the spectacular economy. Internships are awarded as 'prizes' (ie, by MTV or Rolling Stone), and serve to provide low-cost formats for producing media programming. Online poker sites offer 'internships' to students who fly to offshore tropical sites to perform as web-cast celebrities for the huge undergraduate gambling population. These particular examples highlight a dual accumulation strategy by employers--who get service labour for low or no pay, but also--yet more importantly--accumulate value in the entertainment goods they sell, either reality programming, or webcasts drawing clientele to gambling sites.

Of particular importance is understanding that this dual accumulation strategy--capturing value from the student body simultaneously in cheap service labour and spectacle--was pioneered by higher education and remains of critical importance to campus employers and administrations. If anything can explain the fact that basketball and football coaches are the highest paid public employees in the United States--often earning millions in salary--it is the long history of higher education's unique accumulation strategy, a strategy that profit-seeking corporations have recently been trying to emulate, with some success.

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To an extent, college athletics has been examined as a form of undercompensated work in which student athletes create revenue-generating spectacle in exchange for dubious education goods.

But athletics for broadcast television is just one way that students donate or partially donate labour to schools in the creation of campus culture--from the creation of consumable content (student newspapers, weblogs) to participation in plays, singing groups, orchestras, dance troupes, service organisations, religious activities, business clubs, fraternities, honor societies, political campaigns, student government and so forth.

Students participate in the labour and culture of administration, by completing evaluations forms, exchanging notes and opinions regarding faculty, maintaining files of term papers, and so forth.

One might easily argue that the time spent by students in gyms and tanning salons--presenting themselves for student-photographers in official campus publications and unofficial fraternity/sorority blogs is a donation to the campus brand. This may seem frivolous, but in fact it's quite significant, as is clear by the lengths to which gambling sites and other vendors will go to create such an illusion. Indeed, where these contributions don't really exist--on commuter campuses with a moribund student culture, for instance--they generally have to be manufactured for the cameras of paid marketing professionals.

The winning student learns that participating in at least the second prong of the campus's dual accumulation strategy is not optional. Winners do not need to participate in the 30 weekly hours of cheap service labour, but they'd better give their time away. Those who must work the thirty hours quickly learn that if they want to be winners, they must match--or appear to match--the gifts of labour-time offered by those not working, or become, in fact, losers.

Those students who work, persist, and 'win' learn extreme discipline, extreme medication, and sometimes, extreme ideology: they become advertisements for an abusive system clearly failing the majority of participants. Like Navy pilots jacked on benzedrine, they take their medicine, freely give themselves to Top Gun culture in exchange for the propaganda that they are the best because they are willing to drive the napalm truck--and because they weren't smart, reflective, ethical, free or humane enough to 'wash out'--and acquire the belief that the heights are their milieu, that they are just doing their jobs while spreading misery and death in the habitus below' (not exactly as edited for SAQ).

My apologies for the long extract, but it captures some of the tension between my account and Stefano's (and I freely acknowledge that his account remedies defects in mine!) Just to take one interesting line of inquiry--if I were writing a grant to study the patterns of Ritalin abuse on college campuses, I'd actually be very curious to see whether it's higher in undergraduates self-identifying as pre-professional versus those with a business major.

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If I had to come up with a working hypothesis, I'd start with the possibility that perhaps business students were less likely to abuse prescription stimulants, and those hoping to grab slots in the shrinking, proletarianised professions more likely. If that thesis proved correct--and I wish someone would write a grant to find out--then Stefano might be right about the availability of space and time for study in the heads and curricula of business students. They'd be the soft theory heads of a leadership class formerly constituted by reading Keats and Kesey, while English majors would be trending toward the practical grunts under their genteel, aristocratic direction. But he might also be wrong: that is, simply because he's grasped a fundamental contradiction--as with the factory floor, the potential point for intervention is also the pounding heart of the extraction process.

My interest in these questions reflects an idea I've been toying with, that there's a growing split in the professional-managerial class. On the one hand, there's a strong movement to proletarianise professionals, conspicuously college faculty, but also physicians, lawyers and accountants. Hence the usefulness of Gary Rhoades' essential observations on the rise of 'managed professionalism'. In this vein, 'professionalism' is today more of an ideology than a life-way. As an ideology useful to one's employers, for instance, professionalism as devotion to one's clients, the public good, and the culture of one's field is clearly a vector for the super-exploitation of all kinds of other workers, from retail sales to schoolteachers.

Like professionals, millions of service-economy and clerical workers are now expected to donate hours of work off the clock, donating time to email and other employer-related communication, engaging in unpaid training and 'keeping up', etc. Throughout the economy, workers are urged to give freely of themselves--to serve--in exchange for psychic returns. All of this 'acting professional', however, doesn't come with what used to be a professional's paycheck. And all of these gifts come from self-care--from exercise, sleep, family and study: hence stimulant abuse among restaurant workers and physicists alike.

On the other hand, management is increasingly professionalised, via the worldwide triumph of the business curriculum--the first true global monoculture, with the keywords and master concepts (excellence, quality, change, accountability, learning organisation, etc.) framed by the 'great authors' of our time: W. Edwards Deming, Peter Senge, etc. And the top managers, and the upper-middle managers, and even many of the middle managers still get a professional's paycheck and more. They get paid in close relation to their ability to creatively summon the affect of others: the better they play 'Ya Gotta Serve Somebody' and extract donated work-time from everyone else, the more they whack down in their own 'pay for performance'.

One way of looking at certain trends in the mass culture of the professional managerial class (yeah, with 900 channels and a global audience, you can have multiple mass cultures) is in reaction to the proletarianisation of the white collar worker, and the tension between the residual culture of professionals, the dominant culture of management, and the related management-engineered faux-professional cultures of other workers. The recent 'Retreat to Move Forward' episode of 30 Rock once again lampooning GE management's 'Six Sigma' culture captures this neatly, but really the whole premise of the series is the running war between the workplace culture of

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entertainment professionals and the junk culture that GE management is trying to impose on them. The episode's true-enough version of the six pillars of Sigma: 'Teamwork, insight, brutality, male enhancement, handshakefullness, and play hard'. (It falls into the not-really-a-joke category, though, when you think about how your university president got the job).

There are several series thematising the proletarianisation of the teacher right now. The most successful by far is AMC's *Breaking Bad*, which thematises the murderous logic of putting profit-seeking dolts in charge of social goods, especially health care and education. But what made the series' first season such a success was its exploration of the consequences of proletarianisation for the professional subjectivity. While the second season softened the edges, in the first episodes there were dramatic, startling consequences. When diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, the scales simply fall from the eyes of high-school chemistry teacher Walter White. Recognising his proletarianisation, he puts the energy he formerly dedicated to the idealistic service of others into providing security for his family. He becomes a manager, taking over a former student's small-time meth business, re-structuring the operation to maximise profits. (And before you complain about it exploiting the scourge of methamphetamine to capture the crisis of the PMC, consider that Ritalin and meth are close chemical cognates, frequently taken for similar purposes).

White's turn into ruthlessness--he abruptly 'breaks bad'--resolving overnight to become the exploiter rather than the exploited is what separates the show from the soggy liberalism of Showtime's *Weeds*, which features a soccer mum dealing pot to keep up her sense of entitlement. *Breaking Bad* is more like *The Sopranos*, where half-smart gangsters in McMansions allegorise the organised criminals actually running the country, or *The Wire*, where the actually-existing thuggery of management theory in public service is continuously thematised. All three of these shows feature what to me is a welcome populist strain of literary naturalism and proletarian sensibility, a hint that we might be returning to an awareness of Jack London's sense of the eat or be eaten ferocity of the class war from above on the rest of us. I hope so, anyway.

NOTES

* *Some portions of this essay are adapted from online contributions to the Chronicle of Higher Education Review (chronicle.com/review/brainstorm), The Valve (thevalve.org), and How the University Works (marcbousquet.net).*

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