

Introduction: higher education, engaged anthropology and hegemonic struggle

BOONE W. SHEAR AND SUSAN BRIN HYATT



Higher education in the global knowledge economy

On 22 August 2013, President Obama announced a new plan to further reform higher education in the United States (Obama 2013). Speaking from the campus of the State University of New York Buffalo, Obama set the stage for his intervention. He acknowledged some of the ongoing social inequalities and hardships facing individuals and families, and decried the exorbitant costs of higher education that are leading to ‘crushing’ amounts of student debt and are pricing some students out of higher education altogether. As a solution to economic suffering and precariousness, Obama promised to increase access to higher education, make higher education more affordable, and ensure that student debt would be curbed and made more manageable. Obama was resolute, stating that, ‘higher education is still the best ticket to upward mobility in America, and if we don’t do something about keeping it within reach, it will create problems for economic mobility for generations to come’ (Obama 2013).

As a way to safeguard this Shibboleth of education as a pathway to the American Dream, Obama charged Secretary of Education Arne Duncan – the architect of the Obama administration’s education reform efforts that have further marketised primary and secondary education in the U.S.A. (Lipman 2011) – with the task of ‘lead[ing] an effort to develop a new rating system for America’s college’s before the 2015 college year’ (Obama 2013).¹ As Obama explained, colleges would need to be rated through ‘metrics like, how much debt does the average student leave with? How easy is it to pay off? How many students graduate on time? How well do those graduates do in the workforce? Because the answers will help parents and students figure out how much value a college truly offers’ (Obama 2013).

These new metrics, along with the ability of universities to engage in cost-saving innovations, would then presumably be used to rate schools so that student-consumers could make the best-informed, rational choices based on the instrumental, economic *value* of education offered by each institution. To further facilitate this transformation, these metrics would then be used to ‘change how we allocate federal aid for colleges’. In sum, Obama laid out a framework that would further codify on-going processes of marketisation and surveillance at the university, bringing the heterogeneous and unruly U.S.A. higher education terrain into closer alignment with the more consolidated and centralised higher education systems of other OECD nations.

As we write this introduction, Obama’s plans have yet to take final shape, let alone be implemented, but of particular importance, for us, is the ideological context from which these policy proposals emerge. For Obama, education reform is necessary for individual economic success because of a broader discursive framework shaping education and economic policy today, where ‘greater and greater global competition in a knowledge-based economy’ is understood as a key fact of our current lives. In a global knowledge economy, nations, regions and municipalities are positioned in direct competition with each other; economic success at every scale is dependent on the ability to commodify and own knowledge as well as on the availability of skilled workers who can both create products for and provide services to knowledge-based corporations.

This neoliberal fantasy of unbridled market competition via the marketisation of knowledge provides the ideological terrain from which much of the education reform efforts in the past few decades have emerged. As the chapters in this volume show, universities both bear the marks of neoliberal restructuring and are enlisted into participating in further restructurings through discursive and material transformations that are reshaping institutional objectives, influencing the nature of academic practice, and instilling new beliefs, affects and desires in students, faculty and administrators. It is precisely these dynamics – these implications of the university, its people and its practices in broader economic and cultural transformations – that we are interested in here.

The origin of this volume can be traced to a collaborative project in the Anthropology Department at the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 2007–2008. For the better part of two years faculty, graduate students and undergraduates met together to investigate, discuss and attempt to respond to the changing conditions at the university from which we research and write; learn and teach; and accommodate, reform and

resist (see Shear and Zontine this volume). One of the outcomes of this project was a symposium that produced earlier versions of four of the chapters in this volume, all of which were originally published in *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences* (LATISS) along with John Clarke's chapter examining the modernization of U.K. universities. (The chapters by Hyatt, Lyon-Callo, Shear and Zontine and Clarke appeared in the 2010 (vol. 3, no. 3) special issue of LATISS and that by Davis in 2011 (vol. 4, no. 1). A pair of chapters previously published in LATISS, one by Cris Shore (2010 vol. 3, no. 1) and another by Susan Wright and Jakob Williams Ørberg in 2008 (vol. 1, no. 1), investigating university reforms in New Zealand and in Denmark respectively, further strengthen the comparative aspects of this volume. All of these chapters have been revised and updated. Finally, Davydd Greenwood takes measure of the authors' work in the Afterword and points a way forward through collaborative, participatory research. Greenwood, whose own writing on education and action research (see, for example, Greenwood 2002; 2007a; 2007b) has helped to inspire much of the work in this volume, also provided critical and helpful feedback on all of the chapters.

In this introduction, we aim to situate the university as an important location of hegemonic struggle. In reflecting on the dilemmas and challenges we have faced in each of our own university settings, we illustrate how universities – and the people who teach, learn and work at universities – are thoroughly implicated and embroiled in processes of economic and cultural production. We briefly describe the contours and manifold impacts of neoliberal restructuring of the university in relation to the broader political scene. Universities – as institutions that are often presented as vehicles to produce people, knowledge and products for social well-being and coherence – offer an unusually rich and important location for critical investigation and for the politicisation of cultural production.

We then argue that ethnography, with its emphasis on lived experience, can be a particularly effective tool with which to explore both the local manifestations of broader processes as well as to uncover areas of slippage, discontinuity and surprise between the global and the local, between structure and agency and between theory and practice. We use several examples to illustrate how ethnographic research and engaged teaching can uncover and mobilize the unexpected insights found in the interstitial spaces connecting people and cultural processes. We describe how each of the chapters in this volume relies on the use of ethnographic methods including participant-observation, qualitative in-

interviews and reflexive analysis to help us think through how academic practices, working conditions and university objectives are structured through changing conditions that can be linked to dominant class interests. We suggest that by calling attention to and revealing the workings of these agendas – as well as by investigating the beliefs, desires and practices of those attempting to negotiate and respond to these same agendas, including students, faculty, administrators and other community members – we can become better equipped to understand and resist the conditions that we are in. Such reflexive analysis is essential if academics and students are to imagine new possibilities, institutions and practices and are to work for potential transformations, most particularly through engaged learning and teaching.

Some brief notes on neoliberalism

Before we proceed further, allow us to take a brief detour to consider the theoretical and political entanglements of our titular frame, *Learning Under Neoliberalism: Ethnographies of Governance in Higher Education*. Given the ubiquity of neoliberalism as a conceptual frame and signifier, as well as the increasing number of critiques of neoliberalism's textual ubiquity, we feel obliged to discuss how we understand and are treating neoliberalism in relation to the chapters in this volume.

As Ferguson (2010), Clarke (2008) and others have suggested, browsing through the scholarly literature might lead one to the conclusion that neoliberalism is everywhere, an agenda that is saturating our lives in myriad ways. Appearing at once as heterogeneous in its manifestations yet coherent as a project, neoliberalism can operate as a sort of master signifier that gathers together a motley mix of social processes and deleterious conditions in the social field; it purports to explain inequality, poverty and oppression in relation to historical change, social and economic restructuring, global economic and cultural flows, contemporary governance and policies associated with privatisation, marketisation and the withdrawal of the state from particular social welfare provisioning. All this can be accounted for and contained within a neoliberal imaginary. As Elyachar (2012: 76) succinctly put it, 'referring to neoliberalism has become a shorthand way for signalling all that is wrong in the ethnographic present'. Though sometimes conceptually and politically useful, an imagined coherence can also work to stunt theoretical investigation into the nature of neoliberalism(s), as well as leave little room for manoeuvre away from neoliberalism's reach (Elyachar 2012; Ferguson 2010; Gibson-Graham 1996).

In its everywhere taken-for-granted-ness, neoliberalism works to conceal as much as it reveals about the world (Clarke 2008). Scholars have been attempting to move away from analyses that present neoliberalism as a taken-for-granted and coherent worldview and have instead identified and mobilized multiple neoliberalism(s) using more conceptual precision and complexity. In fact, one of the contributions of this volume is to show how ethnography serves to highlight the ways in which similar constellations of ideas – not least about university reform – find very different expressions and outcomes in different national settings. Adopting a historical approach, some scholars argue that neoliberalism should be understood as processual and always unfolding (Canaan 2013), or as transitioning from one incarnation and context into new assemblages (Hyatt 2011). Others argue that neoliberalism is necessarily always in a hybrid form (Clarke 2008), is assembled differently in different locations (Ong 2006; 2007), and both constitutes and is constituted by local conditions, contingent encounters and social movements (Bockman 2012; Goldstein 2012).

Like the scholars above we, too, reject any notion of neoliberalism as an entirely coherent, cohesive project. We agree with Clarke (2008), Kingfisher and Maskovsky (2008) and others that it is precisely in the specificity of particular cultural arrangements and assemblages that we can find interesting contradictions, spaces where neoliberalism's reach might be averted and possibilities for new logics, practices and worlds to emerge.

This recent theoretical challenge to a presupposed neoliberal hegemony – and concomitant attention to heterogeneity and contingency – is indicative of a rapidly changing political and cultural terrain in which ethnographic work is taking place. On-going economic crises and deepening inequalities, dissolution of the Washington Consensus, social movements and protests in the Middle East, Occupy, Idle No More, 38 degrees, uprisings in Turkey, Chile and Brazil have reshaped public discourse, policy and politics and have created openings for both conservative retrenchment and radical change. Thatcher's statement that There Is No Alternative is no longer axiomatic. Though some states have turned to progressive and even radical reforms,² more have doubled-down on the logics of marketisation and privatisation associated with neoliberal restructuring, joining these processes with populist rhetoric and authoritarian measures to impose austerity and protect the interests of the elite. At the same time, visions and practices for new worlds – what we might describe as a 'politics of possibility' (Shear 2014; Cornwell 2011; Escobar 2004; Fórum Social Mundial; Gibson-Graham

2008b; Gibson, Cameron and Healy 2013; Holbrook 2013; Miller 2011; Molina 2013; Quinones Jr. et al. 2009) – appears to be spreading at the community and local levels, suffusing grassroots politics, and in some cases connecting across political contexts through social and informational networks.

As anthropologists study with communities and social movements, and study up (Nader 1969) and study ‘through’ (Shore and Wright 1997) and struggle against power (Lyon-Callo and Hyatt 2003; Greenwood 2007b; Shear and Lyon-Callo 2013), theoretical approaches and political commitments are forged anew; they are recast through negotiated relationships with research subjects/collaborators whose own interests, hopes and desires are themselves resituated by and responding to a changing cultural-political terrain. At a certain level then, the divergent theoretical understandings of and approaches involving ‘neoliberalism’ – or any other political framework – might be understood as *moral* commitments and *strategic* choices to emphasize particular problems and sets of relations that might produce particular epistemological and political effects. Indeed, we understand knowledge production – what scholars and students say and think, write and teach – not only to reflect reality (a necessarily partial and situated view of reality) but also to construct and constitute it (Burke and Shear 2014; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Gibson-Graham 2008a).

A central aim of this volume is to explore ethnographically how the practices of engaged scholars and teachers are being constrained, produced and reconfigured in relation to new discourses and rationalities associated with neoliberal governance – processes like marketisation, privatisation, responsabilising individuals, auditing and accountability, and entrepreneurialism – as well as how teaching about these transformations might create possibilities for new interventions. If, as engaged scholars, we intend our research, writing and teaching to produce possibilities for a more democratic, socially just, egalitarian future, we must remain vigilant; we must remain aware of and on guard against the processes that push and pull our identities and desires. We need investigations that can help us reflect on how our own practices as engaged scholars are being constrained and configured in relation to broader cultural-economic forces, in order to be able to locate possibilities for effective agency and intervention.

Our adherence to the moniker and concept of neoliberal governance, can be considered in part a strategic choice for two interrelated reasons. First, we find it important to draw attention to the relationship between global-capital, international and state policies, and university

transformations – and most especially to those transformations that encourage or coerce individuals to invest themselves in university restructurings and reforms. We are interested, as are all of the scholars whose chapters appear in this volume, in investigating the way in which the university's practices and relevant social actors are recast by discourses that work to shape and manage the 'conduct of conduct' (Lemke 2001: 191 citing Foucault). Second, we wish to position the chapters in this volume in a shared political-theoretical space while at the same time providing enough room for each of the authors to be able to make their own commitments in relation to the different ways that they understand, experience, and care about the impacts of neoliberal restructuring at the university. Thus, we find it less important to define neoliberalism succinctly and more important to position 'neoliberalism' as a relatively open signifier that can help us think about governance and social reproduction across scale and space. We are not making the claim that neoliberalism is all that there is or that the term neoliberalism can adequately capture and explain all of the problematic transformations at the university. Rather, we are suggesting that in order to see these different cases through a comparative lens, deploying the notion of neoliberalism is a useful trope that allows us to situate individual instances in a larger context.

In a recent commentary, Maskovsky (2012) reminds us that the various crises at the university are not solely a product of neoliberalism; as he notes, new forms of right-wing populism, including the Tea Party movement in the U.S.A., have impelled the adoption of austerity measures that outflank an earlier era of neoliberal reforms. Like Maskovsky's example, the chapters in this volume examine the discursive articulations of neoliberalism with other forms of governance, power and oppression. As Shear and Zontine illustrate in their chapter, attributing too much explanatory power to any particular 'strong theory' can work to prescribe outcomes in advance and lead to political despair and/or disengagement (and see Gibson-Graham 2006). We are, however, beginning from the position that neoliberal processes are powerfully reshaping university life across national contexts in myriad, problematic ways, and are implicating universities and the people in them in capitalist relations of production and interrelated forms of oppression.

Universities and social reproduction

Of course, universities have never been unencumbered by broad cultural-economic processes. Characterizing universities and academic life-

gone-by as either spaces of free inquiry on the one hand, or as hotbeds of radical indoctrination on the other elides the always deep integration and entanglements of university practice with society writ-large. Certainly, one purpose of formal education in industrial societies has always been to produce people and products necessary for exploitation and economic growth (Barrow 1990; Bowles and Gintis 1976); this means producing workers with the requisite technical skills and also producing people who accept or invest themselves in the given social order (Althusser 1971; Sotiris 2013). Academics, students, and the teaching and learning that they do, are necessarily located in a compromised space, shaped in part by elite interests working through the state (Gramsci 2003; Shear 2008).

In short, the restructuring of universities today is not altogether novel and universities are always changing in relation to broader political-economic and cultural transformation (Rabo and Wright 2010). Nevertheless scholars, students, workers and activists are making the claim that contemporary restructuring is inordinately severe and profound, encompassing changes to university goals, governing structures, labour conditions, pedagogy, and curricula. These changes are not occurring evenly within and between nation states, but are structured through capital imperatives, international policies, differentially situated discursive regimes and local conditions – including historical differences in university systems – as well as in relation to the agency of administrators, academics, and students who negotiate, transform, and resist individually, collectively, and as part of broader social movements.

Outlining university reforms

Over the past few decades, university reform has been driven from two seemingly incongruous but in fact mutually reinforcing directions. First, higher education has been caught up in the broader neoliberal trend of privatisation. This trend has several dimensions found in various constellations in different countries. In some countries higher education, like other public services, has been *devalued* as a public good (exceptions include Denmark and Norway where higher education for domestic students is still free). Where social well-being has come to be understood, not as the obligation of government, but as the responsibility of individuals and the domain of the private sector, the percentage of public spending on higher education has generally decreased. Decreasing public funding has prompted universities in many locations to restructure internal budgets and seek out new sources of revenue,

especially from international and domestic students and their families. Tuition and fees have skyrocketed in many locations, further structuring racialised class exclusions and generating a staggering amount of student debt. For example, in the U.S.A. student loan debt is now the largest form of unsecured debt, surpassing credit cards and auto loans (de Rugy 2013). Revenue from students is also extracted in the form of surplus value through poorly paid and unpaid labour. Student labour is interwoven into the university's hyper-exploitative growth industry – part-time and contingent labour (Bousquet 2008). In the United States, for example, non-tenured and non-tenure track instructors now account for about 75 per cent of college teachers. The American Association of University Professors has provided a graphic representation showing changing percentages of contingent labour in higher-education teaching over the past few decades in the United States (Curtis 2013).

Another identified area of potential revenue has been the private sector, itself. Industry-university partnerships, what Shore and McLaughlan (2012) researching in New Zealand identify as 'third stream' activities, are enacted through a variety of different arrangements including commercialization, technology transfer, corporate investment and public-private partnerships. Again the existence of business and corporate interests at the university is nothing novel, but both the sheer number of relationships as well as the degree of intimacy and shared intention is certainly worth noting (Washburn 2005).

What is new is the extent to which university-business linkages have become *institutionalized* through the direct involvement of the universities themselves [Etkowitz 2003; Laredo 2007] in what appears to be conscious strategies to translate university knowledge into revenue through leasing academic and technological resources to business [Shore and McLaughlin 2012: 267].

For-profit higher education is posing both a challenge and an opportunity to more traditional higher education structures. In the United States for example, for-profit universities offering degrees through flexible, on-line programs have exploded in numbers (Lee 2012). At the same time, in response, public and non-profit private universities are also adopting on-line, profit models as increasingly important new sources of revenue. Public, not-for-profit and private enterprises are becoming intertwined in new and complex ways (as Davis shows in her chapter in this volume).³

The second direction of change is that even while universities have restructured in relation to public disinvestment and concomitant privati-

sation logics, the professed importance and *value* of higher education to the health and welfare of both the individual and society has never been greater. As Wright explains (2014: 297–298), the discursive production of the global knowledge economy has upped the stakes of higher education for individual, social, and national prosperity. As she writes

... through the 1990s [the work of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)] promoted the idea that the future lay in a global economy operating on a new resource – ‘knowledge’. This idea was taken up by other transnational organizations like the European Union (EU), the World Economic Forum (WEF), and the World Bank (WB). They argued that a future global knowledge economy was both inevitable and fast approaching. Each country’s economic survival, they maintained, lay in its ability to generate a highly skilled workforce capable of developing new knowledge and transferring it quickly into innovative products and new ways of organising production. The OECD in particular developed policy guidance for its members (the thirty richest countries in the world) to make the reforms deemed necessary to survive this global competition. It measured and ranked their performance and galvanized national ministers into an emotionally charged competition for success and avoidance of the ignominy of failure. Universities were thrust centre stage in this vision of the future. They were to ‘drive’ their country’s efforts to succeed in the global knowledge economy.

In the imaginary of the global knowledge economy, ‘knowledge is treated as a raw material’ (Rabo and Wright 2010: 2 citing Slaughter and Rhoades 2004: 17) for ‘mining’ and ‘refining’ (Rabo and Wright 2010). Indeed, the catchphrase of the Danish reforms was ‘From idea to invoice’: the reforms introduced tighter methods of steering and governing universities, so that they could be trusted with greater state investment, to produce ideas which could be harvested by the private sector and converted into innovative products. Thus, universities have come to be understood as primary sites for economic production itself, engines of economic growth that power the economy by creating knowledge-products for private sector growth as well as providing workers who have the abilities to succeed within and help grow private industry.

Internally, universities have restructured to more closely resemble for-profit corporations in structure and practices. In contrast to the decline in percentage of tenure-track faculty, the ranks of administrators and their salaries swelled. In the U.S.A. for example, ‘employment of administrators jumped 60 per cent from 1993–2009, 10 times the growth rate for tenured faculty’ (Hechinger 2012). Relations between

administrators and faculty have become more hierarchical and university governance has become more centralized, leading to new identities and identifications *within* the university. As Shore (2010: 26) notes, [administrators] ‘now claim to *be* the University, and relegate staff, alumni, and students to the role of “stakeholders”’.

Along with new administrative relations have come new managerial techniques intended to facilitate more revenue generation, commercialisation, rationalisation and standardisation of academic practices in line with university objectives. These include performance evaluations, point systems, and other accountability measures that have created new institutional forms and individual behaviours (Brenneis 2009; Canaan 2008; Strathern 2000; Wright 2012; Wright 2014). Indeed, these components of what Shore and Wright (1999; 2000) describe as audit culture can be understood precisely as technologies of governance that encourage individuals to understand themselves and act in new ways, in accordance with new university objectives.

While audit culture disciplines and reconfigures subjects inside the university, universities are implored to externalise the outcomes of internal audits through ranking systems (as well as through other forms of ‘reputation management’) (Wright 2012) in order to compete for prestige, corporate partnerships, government support, and in order to attract students. A growing, global market for students – particularly for students who can pay the full costs of tuition and fees – and the importance of higher education to national success more generally, has become a central plank in economic development initiatives in both the global north and global south. Universities in ‘developed’ countries are extending their reach across borders through international campuses and as part of global universities and regional development hubs (Looser 2012; Ross 2009). As Naidoo (2008) suggests the commodification of higher education is likely to continue to reproduce hierarchies and stratifications between nation states. ‘Developing’ nations who are enticed and pressured to participate in knowledge economy development are at a distinct disadvantage and can be positioned as high volume, profit-making sites and ‘markets for mass dumping of low-quality knowledge’ (Naidoo 2008: 94) for higher education enterprises in the global north.

Subject making, negotiation, resistance

Despite the engaged and critical approaches that as anthropologists and other academics we bring to our own research, it is sometimes difficult

for us to gain a perspective on the ways that we, too, are enrolled in and produced through cultural processes in our own lives. Indeed, it is both fascinating and disheartening to see the ease with which some of our colleagues – both as individuals, and at the departmental level – have been brought into new relationships, assemblages, and strategies for capital accumulation by accepting, accommodating and sometimes eagerly embracing new initiatives and adopting concomitant subject positions of student consumers, academic entrepreneurs and revenue generators, and in general, increasingly calculating and competitive, individual rational actors in relation to teaching, publications, research opportunities, and so on.

Of course, complicity and participation in problematic processes cannot be fully accounted for by a lack of awareness of these changes. We do not mean to suggest that what is required here is simply a process of ‘waking up’ through consciousness-raising. Indeed, we find ourselves being pushed, pulled, and reshaped in conflicting ways, even as we engage in activist research, critical pedagogy, and collective struggles. It is important to keep in mind that identities and desires are not singular but are contradictory and complex. And subject formation is not always a clean, concatenated process, but takes place along multiple psychic registers. As Clarke, and Shear and Zontine, discuss in their chapters in this volume, we must be aware not only of new information produced through critical investigations. We must also be attuned to the complex, emotional and affective processes that are experienced and embodied through our lived experience, what Williams (1977) called the ‘structures of feeling’ that shape and delimit our political horizons.

We do not claim here that ethnographic investigation and critical, engaged teaching is a ‘solution’ to the problems associated with higher education reform, let alone neoliberal restructuring. We do want to suggest, however, that critical and reflexive investigation can be understood as a process of recognizing ourselves as cultural-political subjects, and exploring the ways in which we are caught up in ‘webs of meaning’ and relations of power of our own re-making. With this recognition, comes the possibility for transformation through engaging in new practices of thinking, teaching, and learning.

The profound impacts of neoliberal restructurings at the university, then, offer a particular moment of opportunity for teaching and learning. The ascension of the knowledge economy as discourse and performative practice has, perhaps, thrown universities – and the people in them – more fully into the centre of political struggle. This new configuration is reflected in the way in which recent student protests and movements

have been influenced by and helped to constitute broader social movements (Helepololei 2013; Juris 2012; Neary 2012; Schwartz-Weinstein 2013; Wilson 2012). The incorporation of students (and academics) into these movements can be an important pedagogical process; students can begin to recognize their own interests not as singular antagonisms, but as connected in complex, contradictory ways with those of other oppressed, exploited, and disaffected groups, communities and populations across space.

At the same time, we see teaching and learning at the university itself as a space of radical possibility. The classroom is an opportunity to help us – as teachers, students and workers – realise ourselves as political subjects through theoretical investigation and discussion, but also through projects that forge collaborative relationships and alliances with community organizations and social movements. If, indeed, the university has become a more integral, more central site of social and economic and social reproduction, then learning and teaching about these conditions opens onto a horizon in which faculty and students can more clearly realize their everyday practices as part of a broader, hegemonic struggle.

Ethnographising neoliberalism at the university

In the chapters that follow, the authors bring their particular understandings of neoliberalism to bear on their examinations of different instantiations of neoliberal ideology, policies, and practices in a range of national and academic settings. Four of the chapters are set in the U.S.A. and three are from Denmark, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Despite the differing national contexts, there are important continuities among the case studies represented here.

One of the themes that extends across the chapters is that of centralisation. All of the chapters address the ways in which national policies are severely limiting the autonomy of academic institutions. In some respects, the U.S.A. has been the setting that has been most resistant to centralised systems of oversight because of its size and complex interweaving of private and public forms of funding and governance (see Hyatt 2004: 25). Yet, political currents in the U.S.A. have also moved towards an emphasis on greater standardisation. While the U.K. has long had a National Curriculum that all schools have had to adhere to, for example, in the U.S.A. 45 out of 50 states have only recently agreed to adopt the so-called Common Core, which emphasizes language and math skills.

At the post-secondary level, many of the private, elite institutions of higher learning in the U.S.A. have remained relatively insulated from many of the changes discussed by the contributors to this volume. It is perhaps telling that all of the U.S.A.-based authors – Hyatt, Lyon-Callo, Shear and Zontine, and Davis – are located in public universities; public sector institutions have experienced particularly significant economic disinvestment and have become targets for political scrutiny compared to private colleges and universities. For example, in 2011, the governor of Florida, Rick Scott, announced that Florida did not need any more anthropologists and that public resources would be better directed away from the social sciences and humanities and towards the STEM disciplines – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math – which he claimed would produce graduates better prepared for the current job market and which would also be more likely to generate economic development.⁴

Countries with more centralised management of education, like the U.K., Denmark and New Zealand, have long been subject to national policies that mandate how students and faculty are evaluated; the outcomes of these ‘exercises’ are tied to funding allocated by their central governments. In a desperate quest for new sources of revenue, universities in many countries are now seeking out private philanthropists as benefactors. British novelist Malcolm Bradbury, in his 1987 satirical novel *Cuts*, lampoons the unexpected consequences of this frantic pursuit. As a consequence of the draconian austerity measures being enacted by then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Bradbury portrays a beleaguered university that ends up with professors bearing ironic and humorous honorifics like the ‘Durex Chair of French Letters’, Durex being the name of a British condom or ‘French letter’ manufacturer.

More seriously, Brian McKenna (2009) has addressed the ways in which corporate interests that fund higher education also acquire the power to suppress intellectual inquiry and debate. McKenna describes how public campuses in the state of Michigan, and even one private college also located in Michigan, have become beholden to Dow Chemical, a corporation headquartered in that state and known internationally for its disastrous impact on the environment and on people’s health. McKenna (2009) documents several cases in which research that incriminated Dow in serious incidents of dioxin contamination was either censored or ignored.

The search for additional revenues has also led universities to recruit large numbers of overseas students who often come from elite families and who can afford to pay the full costs of tuition and fees. As Shore

notes in his chapter in this volume, ‘Catering for the overseas student market, which in 2006 numbered over 90,000 students, contributed an estimated \$2 billion to New Zealand’s economy in 2005’. This phenomenon is also apparent in other universities in Europe as well as in North America. While international students often are a great asset to campus life, their value for governments and administrators is that they are able to foot hefty bills for the cost of their courses. Concerns about overseas students’ language proficiency in university-level classrooms have also necessitated the creation of entirely new tiers of language classes which, on many campuses, constitute yet another growing revenue stream.

These endeavours can, of course, also backfire. Shore (this volume) also describes how the Chinese press carried several stories portraying the quality of English language teaching in New Zealand as insufficient, thereby prompting several high-ranking government ministers and university administrators to undertake an emergency mission to China to try to repair this damage. As universities now see themselves as institutions that are global, rather than national, competition for international students has intensified. A new tack in this crusade has been for universities to open branches in distant places that glitter with the promise of affluent consumers, who are seeking the cultural capital of a degree from a prestigious western university without having to leave home. In this regard, the wealthy Gulf States have been particularly attractive destinations (Abi-Esper 2012).

New York University (NYU), an elite private institution undergoing a fluorescence of popularity at the moment, has been one of the most vigorous actors on that front and in 2010, NYU established ‘NYU Abu Dhabi’. On one of its web pages, which promotes its identity as ‘The Global Network University’, its offerings are described as follows:

No university has a greater global presence. NYU leads all universities in students studying abroad; over 40 percent of our undergraduates now study abroad, and each year the number increases. In September 2010, NYU opened NYU Abu Dhabi, an audacious step in higher education: the first comprehensive liberal arts and science campus to be operated abroad by a major American research university, offering a complete NYU education to undergraduates outside of New York City and from around the world and creating another ‘portal campus’ to gain access to this dynamic, global network university.⁵

Controversies around such issues as hiring practices and academic freedom in settings like the Gulf States (and China) have been neatly

side-stepped, as universities engage in a new kind of neo-colonial undertaking, refashioning themselves as truly global institutions that are bringing Western educational values and experiences to waiting postulants in far-away places. As Shore (this volume) writes:

What we see in New Zealand is thus a reflection of a more global process in which the traditional *idea* (or meaning) of the university is shifting: from being primarily an instrument of nation-building and the cultural reproduction of a certain notion of ‘national culture’ and ‘education for citizenship’, New Zealand universities are increasingly being conceived of as transnational corporations competing in the global market for the provision of commercial educational services (emphasis as in the original).

Whether this provisioning is taking place on the campus of the home university or through creating satellite campuses and programmes elsewhere, Shore has identified how internationalization is profoundly altering the priorities of academic institutions.

Western and OECD universities are also attracting investments from other countries, some of which come with clandestine agendas and expectations. As McKenna (2009: 41) writes, ‘It is not just corporate donors . . . that can constrain free inquiry, but for some universities, it is foreign governments’. A growing concern in many places is the proliferation of Confucius Institutes, Chinese language and culture centres entirely funded by the Chinese government and hosted by universities outside of China. Institutions that elect to become sites for Confucius Institutes do not have any purview over the curriculum or hiring of Institute instructors (Simcox 2009). Recently, the Canadian Association of University Teachers called on Canadian Universities to close Confucius Institutes based on claims of restrictions on what topics could be addressed in these classes as well as concerns about hiring practices (Ghoreishi 2014). In November 2013, McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario announced its decision to close its Confucius Institute based on the fact that the Chinese government forbade Confucius Institute employees from participating in the Fulan Gong movement (Bradshaw and Freeze 2013).

Of course, these examples are not intended to suggest that universities were not also vulnerable to such ideological meddling prior to the neoliberal era. Indeed, during the Cold War years, many universities became sites for research that bolstered capitalist models for development and disparaged ‘communist’ or socialist alternatives. Rather, it is to call attention to the ways in which new conceptualisations of the role

of universities in the world have also created new opportunities for the suppression of particular political perspectives.

As we have stated earlier in this introduction, we acknowledge the multiple contradictions associated with the notion of ‘neoliberalism’. That one of the chapters, authored by Wright and Ørberg, needed substantial revision between the time of its initial publication (2008) and the present in order to account for changes in Danish Higher Education that they were unable to foresee illustrates the point that we are dealing with a shape-shifting and somewhat slippery phenomenon. We hope that in this introduction and in all of the chapters that follow, we have embodied the insight offered by Shore in his chapter, in which he writes: ‘... I argue that the new model of the entrepreneurial and corporate university has not so much *replaced* the traditional functions and meaning of the university as *added* a new layer of complexity to the university’s already diverse and multifaceted roles in society’ (emphasis as in the original). In his contribution to this volume, Shore meticulously periodises and analyses the chronology of changes in New Zealand’s universities since the 1980s. He illustrates the fact that neoliberal ideas stretch across the political spectrum, noting that in the 1980s, it was a Labour government that initiated the first wave of neoliberal reforms. These changes were then carried forward and intensified by far more conservative governments in the 1990s. The trends that Shore identifies in his examination of higher education in New Zealand – the conscious internationalisation of the student body and concomitant marketing of New Zealand universities; the emergence of a more authoritarian regime of governance in universities; and the range of market-driven reforms that were instituted – all find echoes in the other case studies.

In their chapter on Denmark, Wright and Ørberg offer a vivid illustration of one of the ironies of neoliberal ideology and practice: that is, although the most ardent proponents of neoliberal policies claim to be promoting greater opportunities for ‘freedom’ and ‘choice’, the state has never been a more intrusive presence in the lives of its citizens than it is now (Hyatt 2004: 26). Wright and Ørberg describe the paradoxical ways in which efforts on the part of the Danish government to make universities more autonomous and ‘self-owning’ have actually resulted in a far more invasive and authoritarian systems of governance through emphasizing the notion that universities must be income-generating and open to a range of interested parties, including government, that are glossed as ‘stakeholders’ (a point also made by Shore). But, like Shore, Wright and Ørberg also leave the door open to concede that

there are possibilities for resistance and refusal. As they write, ‘We find a clear model for government steering of universities. But no rationality is ever completely coherent or closed; we also find other elements which confuse the model and point to possible ways that university leaders and academics may find room for manoeuvre’.

John Clarke illustrates the concrete effects of modernization and managerialism in British universities, presenting interrelated material, discursive, and affective transformations. Clarke describes higher education as a governable system, configured through logics and practices of competition. These logics provide direction to university operations and academic practice, which can then be more easily managed and assessed in relation to external, strategic objectives. Like Shore, and Wright and Ørberg, Clarke also looks for the fissures and contradictions in people’s responses to these changes that might open up a space for, as he puts it, ‘alternative ways of making communities’. Of particular importance here is Clarke’s attention to how academics collectively understand and experience university restructuring as a loss of an imagined, romanticized academic community. This irreconcilable loss, Clarke suggests, results in a ‘collective professional melancholia’ which hinders effective political response to university restructuring. Like the other contributors, Clarke’s analysis is also clearly rooted in the messiness of the everyday and commonplace, and he also sees in this messiness possibilities for resistance and for shaping a future that moves beyond a simple nostalgia for an unrealistically romanticised past.

All of the chapters in this collection were written by authors who reflect on the ways that academics and students are variously implicated in the machinations, changes, resistances and accommodations that we discuss. Clarke describes his chapter as ‘a sort of participant ethnography, reflecting the experience of working in, and talking about the higher education sector in the U.K.’. Shore refers to ‘personal observations’ to denote the epistemological stance from which he derives much of his data. Shear and Zontine’s analysis is, in part, a reflection of their own engaged research project. Lyon-Callo scrutinizes his own teaching and community engagement in relation to education reform and, Davis calls her chapter a form of autoethnography. As she notes, ‘an autoethnographic approach can provide valuable insights into the tensions between the neoliberal environment and being an academic in such a setting’. Hyatt describes the outcome and insights garnered from an ethnographic methods course she taught. Thus, we see ourselves very much as located within the landscapes we describe, not outside of them.

In her chapter, Davis provides three examples that illustrate how neoliberal ideas have penetrated the public institution in which she taught. She provides a trenchant analysis of the ways in which the use of numerical measures to assess student achievement and establish standards for admission, while claiming to be ‘objective’, actually mask the ways in which such measures reinforce the privilege of some students at the expense of others. The claim that this is a meritocratic process serves the larger agenda of many institutions, which seek to raise their rankings based on these measures in order to attract a wealthier, more middle-class and often whiter student body as a way of boosting their national prestige and desirability (a theme also touched on by Hyatt). Davis’ second example illustrates the fallacies inherent in neoliberalism’s much-touted notion of the ‘public-private partnership’ by showing how her public institution became a host for an evening business degree program operated by an elite private institution whose main campus was located in another part of the city. That programme and its resources, however, were never made accessible for the full-time students at the public institution. As Davis puts it: ‘The message that the students received was that they could partake in the *aspirations* of neoliberalism: they could hope to be admitted to the private university and might even envision themselves being business majors; but there was no provision for *accessibility* to the programme’ (emphasis as in the original).

Most important, perhaps, and in ways echoed by Shear and Zontine in their chapter, Davis vividly illustrates how processes of measurement, accountability and access to funding streams are all used as ways to tamp down – or deflect entirely – possibilities for activist responses. She shows how many aspects of neoliberalism have given way to – or at least shaded into – far more authoritarian mechanisms of rule that foster self-policing through the use of fear as a tactic.

Like Clarke, Shear and Zontine suggest that simply critiquing and revealing the workings and impacts of deleterious processes may not always lead to political mobilization, and they urge us to pay attention to the relationship between discourse and affect. Shear and Zontine were PhD students in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts when they wrote their original article. They reflect on a departmental reading group intended to investigate and respond to changing conditions at the university. They explore the ways in which the group’s impulses towards activist responses were tempered by the enormity of the challenges they faced in trying to imagine ‘undoing’ neoliberal reforms at the university. ‘The more we understood and em-

phasized our understandings of neoliberalism and university corporatisation, the harder it was to bring to mind realistic responses.’ Shear and Zontine find a way forward by drawing from Gibson-Graham’s mobilization of ‘weak theory’. This is a way of avoiding the totalising and often politically disabling effects of such ‘strong’ concepts as ‘capitalism’ and ‘neoliberalism’ by seeing the world as instead inherently unstable and rife with contingencies and possibilities. ‘By exploring the unknown, rather than extending and exploring the known . . . weak theory can be strong politics – it opens up social options that would be inaccessible to a theorist intent on eliminating surprise’ (Gibson-Graham 2006: 205n15; as cited by Shear and Zontine, this volume).

This emphasis on the role that global economic processes play in contouring American public education is taken up by Vincent Lyon-Callo in his discussion of how parents of primary and secondary school pupils and university students alike imagine their future in the global economy as bound up with the need to emphasize individual achievement over collective action. Lyon-Callo’s work draws on his own participation in these debates in his home state of Michigan, a state with an economy that has been decimated by the collapse of the U.S.A. car industry. Lyon-Callo shows how in reaction to a newly urgent sense of economic insecurity, parents and college students consistently embraced strategies that re-inscribed the values of competition and consumerism despite a lack of evidence that these tactics would effectively counter the negative impacts of economic restructuring. He explains how this reaction ‘made sense’ to the very same people who had been most disadvantaged by economic restructuring. He argues for a kind of dialogic teaching and ethnographic practice as a route towards fostering alternative understandings among community members and university students.

Lastly, Hyatt considers the implications of the changing role that universities, particularly those located in cities, have come to play as engines for local economic development. Hyatt arrived at many of her insights through an ethnographic methods class she taught in 2003, in which students carried out research projects in the primarily African-American neighbourhood surrounding Temple University’s main campus, located in North Central Philadelphia. Hyatt describes how her students’ engagement with local residents allowed them to see how Temple’s adoption of strategies for re-making and marketing the campus and its adjacent community in order to attract new constituencies of upscale, predominantly white and middle-class students, affected the local long-term resident population.

The resulting gentrification, a key feature of neoliberal economic development, threatened to accelerate long-term trends that had systematically displaced African-American community members. In the course of their project, the students and their professor discovered that actions taken by the university itself had helped to produce the very symptoms of decline that their new redevelopment projects purported to remedy. This circumstance is hardly unique; as we write this introduction, there is a dispute brewing in New York City between NYU and its neighbours in the adjacent community of Greenwich Village over the university's plans to construct four new high-rises. These plans have just been put on hold following a New York Supreme Court decision that the parcels of land the university planned to use were actually public parks (Anuta 2014).⁶

Taken together, the chapters in this volume present a rather grim picture of academic life in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. And yet, it is our intent to offer them as hopeful rather than pessimistic. As we show, our engagement with teaching critical thinking makes our classrooms into places where students begin to understand how their lives are imbricated in larger political movements and where social change can begin 'in place'. All of the chapters point to inconsistencies, cracks, contradictions, and possibilities in the various expressions of neoliberalisms that can be exploited in various ways and where the future is far from being a *fait accompli*.

One of the critical strategies for intervention and change, which the authors in this volume advocate, is to use our teaching as a site where we can encourage students, colleagues, and ourselves to examine how they and their communities are implicated in the larger processes we wish to understand and critique. Hyatt's class not only developed an understanding of how neoliberal models for economic development were affecting the residential community located in proximity to Temple's campus; they also engaged in a collective activist response. In addition to their ethnographic projects, students were required to submit shortened versions of their research written for a general audience. At the end of the course, one of the students, working with Hyatt and the CEO of the Community Development Corporation with which the class had partnered assembled the class research papers into a tabloid newspaper. The Community Development Corporation was able to raise sufficient funds to print 10,000 copies of the student-authored newspaper, so that every household within the study area received a free copy. The newspaper provoked debate and discussion within the community, and provided an alternative portrait of the neighbourhood, representing it

as a heterogeneous site with a long-standing history of community activism, thereby countering the image of inexorable decline that the city and the university too often deployed as part of their redevelopment agendas. Although there was no follow-up action after the newspaper was published and distributed (and Hyatt left the university shortly thereafter) local residents at least felt vindicated that their voices were heard. One of the challenges of activism in academia is, of course, the short time frame of semesters or academic years, which constrain possibilities for sustained political action. As Greenwood (2007b: 251) writes, we need to explore further 'how to make AR [Action Research] an available teaching and research strategy that is both sustainable as a pedagogical activity and that engages universities in internal organizational change processes. . .'

Davis and Lyon-Callo also address strategies they use to encourage students to examine the ways in which their own lives and aspirations are compromised by the very same policies that have destroyed local economies in their communities. Lyon-Callo stresses the point that, though his students often reject the possibilities for collective action as a strategy for changing or resisting these policies, they begin reflecting on the fact that the shifts they have witnessed in their own lives were not inevitable or pre-ordained; they were the result of policy decisions, taken at specific moments in time by actors who can be identified. Lyon-Callo describes an exercise he did in which students were asked to interview four people they knew whose lives had been affected by the economic downturn in Michigan. Students then used this data to generate proposals for collaborative projects that could potentially be undertaken in cooperation with community members and local organizations. As Lyon-Callo notes, 'Producing proposals in this one class did not in itself transform the local community but it did begin to transform how the students thought of both anthropology and the possibilities of collective actions'. In a similar vein, Davis describes teaching strategies in which she used the contradictions facing the viability of a Global Black Studies programme at her university as a 'teachable moment'. She used a number of the documents related to the controversy as class readings and had students situate the local conflict within a much broader plane of political imperatives. Davis also describes how her students in another class engaged in semester-long ethnographic studies of how 'neoliberal policy and ideology were translated in a particular space. Students documented such manifestations as community surveillance of the burgeoning immigrant population and the shift from

a manufacturing to a service economy that kept certain residents in perpetually low-wage jobs’.

Whereas Davis, Hyatt and Lyon-Callo show important pedagogical possibilities in the classroom, Shear and Zontine suggest that alternative modes of learning and teaching among students and faculty – even something as seemingly innocuous as a departmental reading group – can cut through the discursive dominance of neoliberal capitalism, ‘indeed, the group’s social practices and academic work were done collectively and without regard for – and in defiance of – productivity markers, intellectual property, and entrepreneurial investment.’ These new practices can offer a different set of subjective conditions from which to think and act in the world.

It used to be that academic settings stood in stark contradistinction to other kinds of 20th century workplaces. The classic image of files of undifferentiated workers, entering drone-like through the portals of their workplaces, first stopping to punch their timecards in a desultory fashion and then submitting to the indignities of surveillance by their supervisors and managers, was once the quintessential – if stereotypical – view of life on the factory shop floor. Those of us who worked in more professional settings were exempt from this kind of oversight.

Now, though we would be foolish to underestimate the privileges still accorded to those academics who enjoy secure employment (a shrinking percentage, admittedly), nevertheless many aspects of our lives are becoming more like the lives of the old industrial working class – more insecure, more closely surveilled, more highly disciplined – just at the same moment that the industrial working class is disappearing from our contemporary economic landscapes. The ways in which these chapters point us towards new possibilities for political action is a vision that is intended to spur us into thinking more creatively about the new kinds of alliances we might need to forge in order to counter the oppressive trends of the present moment, not only within universities but in society more broadly. Such tactics will surely involve us making common cause with other constituencies outside of academia, constituencies – like undocumented immigrants, women on state benefits, and the unemployed, to name just a few examples – who have been far more bruised and battered by the depredations of neoliberalism and its curious doppelganger, the law-and-order state, than we have been. Indeed, organizers, activists, community groups, and social movements have much to teach us about effective forms of resistance, cultural struggle and ways of imagining and enacting new social and economic worlds.

It remains for all of us to take up the challenge of working both inside and outside of academia to create visions for new political possibilities that reach beyond the limits and constraints that the audit culture and the new managerialism have set for us, beyond the symbolic and material constraints of capitalist production, authoritarianism, and multiple forms of oppression. This collection is a modest nod in that direction.

Notes

1. See Lipman 2004 and Johnson 2008 for excellent ethnographic works investigating neoliberal restructuring and primary/secondary education in the United States.
2. See, for example, Iceland's response to corporate finance capital <http://leaksource.wordpress.com/2013/03/10/icelands-revolution-against-globalist-banksters/>, or Bolivia's recently policy towards abandoned factories and worker cooperatives, <http://www.socialistproject.ca/bullet/888.php>, as two of many examples.
3. A department chair of a social science program at a major public university reported to us that without the revenue generated from for-profit extended education programs, her department and possibly others at the university would simply collapse. She went on to explain how the possibility of new tenure-track faculty lines were becoming more dependent on whether or not a department was able to generate revenue through on-line courses of extended education.
4. While the American Anthropological Association issued a very tepid response to Governor Scott's pronouncements (<http://www.aaanet.org/issues/policy-advocacy/upload/letter-to-gov-scott.pdf>), the post-graduate students at the University of South Florida mounted a much more robust reaction (<http://anthropology.usf.edu/thisisanthropology/>).
5. 'The Global Network University', <http://www.nyu.edu/global/the-global-network-university.html>.
6. See also Gregory 2013 on Columbia University's plans to expand in another part of New York City and Etienne's 2012 account of the relationship between the University of Pennsylvania and its neighbours in West Philadelphia, to name some additional examples.

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