Paying for Success "outside your world": *antagonising* neoliberal higher education
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Other worlds are always possible and we should never accept that things cannot be changed, there are always alternatives that have been excluded by the dominant hegemony and that can be actualized.
(Mouffe, 2013, p.132)

This Chapter builds three inter-related arguments about the impacts of neoliberalism within higher education on those (of us) within it and on the society it claims to serve. Firstly, the specific contemporary formations of neoliberalism did not arise as a *tabula rasa* in the late 1970s and early 1980s but rather rely on and are deeply entwined with entrenched conservative social positions (whilst claiming not to be). This neoliberal-conservative nexus maintains particular (and familiar) power arrangements and governs how we fit, or don't, within neoliberal institutions, focusing on higher education institutions. Arising from this, is the second argument that neoliberalism is a form of antagonistic politics which actually relies on systemic eradication of difference from an expected and idealised "fitting body". This systemic eradication is masked within contemporary institutions by ontological claims as to why the familiar power arrangements persist and why creating greater equality would be detrimental, both laying claim to 'common sense' as the foundation of its arguments. Finally, this piece will further assess the impact of neoliberalism, and the price paid, in terms of how we come to understand ourselves and negotiate relationships where we are both subject to and object of neoliberalism. Higher education, sees the *neoliberalisation of the self* in action, institutionally instilling its preconditions and collectively those within it are collusive in the forms of acceptance or resignation (rather than resistance). However, overlooked in previous discussions of resistance is discussion of the affective work demanded to maintain contradictory ways of existing inherent in the neoliberal university particularly that demanded of those who are "Othered" by not meeting the idealised "fitting body".

Contemporary & Historical Formations of Neoliberalism
Neoliberalism is a form of political emphasis which shifted thinking from a focus on the state to the "inner workings of the subject" (Rottenburg, 2013, p.3) with its emphasis on "the extension of market (and market-like) forms of governance, rule and control across all spheres of social life" (Leitner *et al.,*

2007, p.28) including self-conception and normative assumptions about other social actors. Neoliberalism is, therefore, both extensional and intensional (Rottenburg, 2013) in that it has changed both the formation of our external world and our internal experience of the world.

In its extensionality, neoliberalism objectifies us under discursive and practical regimes in which we are the units used and counted to assess our productive capacity under capitalist economics or as Wendy Brown (2015) terms it 'economicization' of all things including previously non-economic spheres and practices. 'Economicization' means a "remaking [of] knowledge, form, content, conduct" objects and subjects as 'economic' (Brown, 2015, p.31). Neoliberalism does not normatively rely on the use of coercive force to impose this remaking, as Soss *et al.* (2011) note "power may operate and be exercised in a variety of ways that do not require coercion… the political importance of [which…] lie precisely in its capacity to make coercive force less necessary for the operation of unequal power relations" (p.24). However, neoliberalism manifests itself through the most expedient means whether that is coercion or seduction. Neoliberalism therefore operates through all faces of power (Lukes 2005), agenda-setting, consensus-building explicit buy-in and "ways of thought […] where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world" (Harvey, 2007, p3) and coercion. The intensionality of neoliberalism is this internal re-conceptualisation enacting 'economisation' of the self which means we interpellate ourselves as subjects who "think and act like contemporary market subjects" (Brown, 2015, p.31) in realms outside where market, money and wealth are direct issues such as health, medicine, family, education, work and relationships. In short we are thus remaking ourselves "always, only, and everywhere as homo oeconomicus" (Brown, 2015, p.31). As Hall & Lamont (2013, p.4) say:

> neoliberalism inspired changes in the dominant scripts of personhood toward ones more focused on a person's individuality and productivity. It promoted new criteria of worth that encouraged many people to approach their lives as if they were "projects" […] people who had once derived self-respect from being "hard workers" found that was no longer enough: one now had to be a worker with high productivity deploying skills validated by the market, signalling worth and social membership through consumption

So we are disciplined by neoliberalism to reconfigure our sense of self as a "responsible self-investor and self-provider" (Brown, 2015, p.84) through a process of 'responsibilization'. Where previously we might have legitimately blamed employers for a lack of time, training or knowledge to complete a role, underpinned by a modernity–focused Fordist notion of the capitalization of time and resource,

now this becomes reformulated into irresponsibility on the part of the worker to not invest in themselves enough to make time (in what would previously have been considered leisure time but with the neoliberal technological creep is now simply unused potentially productive hours) and seek out the training for themselves.

As Foucault (2004) reminds us, neoliberalism did not simply arise in the 1980s as a political rebellion by the new-Right, but rather was a political discourse aimed at reshaping governmentality and subjectivity from the 1930s onwards and gradually gained traction over the next five decades. What has not changed throughout the ascendancy of neoliberalism and in its contemporary formulations is the constituency of those who retain and maintain access to power and capitals. Brown argues the subjectivity required for success under contemporary neoliberalism demands being served (whether paid or unpaid) by others and "only performatively male members of a gendered sexual division of labour can even pretend to the kind of autonomy this subject requires" (2015, p.103). Similarly we could substitute racialized, heteronormative, class-based and disablist divisions of labour into the requirements of this form of subjectivity and indeed we should consider them as intersecting through a matrix of domination (Hill Collins, 1990). The argument here is not that neoliberalism provides a shelter for pre-existing but separate forms of gendered, racialized, disablist, heteronormative power but rather than neoliberalism itself is reliant on, intrinsically bound up with and reproductive of these forms of power. Neoliberalism cannot be anything other than tied up with these power structures and it has, through its intensional reach ensured the continuity of these power structures in both neoliberal advocates and dissenters.

Neoliberalism claims that any similarity of those at the apex of power and resources now and previously (that is the white, male, heterosexual, abled-bodied, unencumbered actor) is based on meritocratic achievement and simply the result of the degree of rationality and labour demonstrated by individuals. However, this similarity deserves more critical exploration than it has hitherto received. Remembering that neoliberalism was "substantially shaped by contestation with Keynesian economists [...] and conservative politicians, among others. Its subsequent mutations seem to have blurred these lines even further [...] neoliberalism itself is a multifaceted hybrid, more Hydra than Goliath" (Leitner *et al.,* 2007, p.27). The Hydra-like relationship between neoliberalism and conservativism is key to understanding how neoliberalism, whilst avowing radical individualism and

non-intervention, has its foundations in already existing patterns of domination. As Apple (2006, p.24) remarks "neoliberalism does not usually stand alone. It is almost always accompanied by parts of a neoconservative agenda". Addressing this neoliberal-neoconservative nexus Goodley, describes neoliberalism as providing "an ecosystem for the nourishment of ableism" (p.2); Brown (2015) comments on neoliberalism's gendered basis, Akram-Lodhi (2006) on its neo-colonialism – however little has been done to date to tie together the intersecting, pervasive oppressive power structures of neoliberalism. Addressing this neoliberal-neoconversative nexus helps address the perceived paradox whereby "people who more strongly endorse neoliberalism also tend to have attitudes that are more […] prejudiced? […] *explicit prejudice and neoliberal economic beliefs should be linked because they are part of a cluster of ideologies that serves to legitimise a hierarchical status quo*. (Hall & Lamont, 2013, p.165; emphasis original)

This is not surprising when we consider, for example, the way that the Mont Pelerin Society, the leading group connected with the formulation and emergence of neoliberal ascendancy, was formed. The first Mont Pelerin conference and subsequent slightly wider original membership of the Society was constituted by Friedrich Hayek writing to fifty-eight people who he considered to share his viewpoint (Hartwell, 1995) about the need to eliminate state involvement in markets and people's lives; fifty-seven of them were men[2] and all were European academics, economists or involved with media production. Therefore, Hayek hand-selected people to ensure that the dominant subjectivity of these thinkers embodied particular, and privileged, forms of self-conception. That, then, predictably became deeply embedded through neoliberalisms contestations. As Jones (2012) notes, "the idea that redistribution and greater equality were not simply disincentives to initiative but actually morally debilitating emerges as a crucial dimension of neoliberal thought" (p.64)[3]. Neoliberalism justifies this as being based on meritocratically deserved advancement from a level playing field (a claim which is epistemologically unsupportable and empirically untrue) whilst neoconservatives see this as the result of historically evidenced hierarchical best fit to understand

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[2] The exception was Cicily Wedgwood, great-great-great-grand-daughter of the potter Josiah Wedgwood. Cicily's lineage includes not only the Wedgwood family but also the descendants of Charles Darwin who supported eugenics. The Darwin and the Wedgwood families had close ties and a series of intermarriages. Cicily was a historian and biographer of nobility who lived with her long-term partner, civil servant Jacqueline Hope-Wallace.
[3] Although as I will discuss later, these critical voices also tend to replicate existing power differentials – Jones (2012) is a book in which Heraclitus gets an index entry but neither equality nor women do.

how society can be protected (Akram-Lodhi, 2006). So whilst neoliberalism espouses a radical equality of opportunity which it sees as setting itself apart from conservative beliefs that the world is naturally not equal, neoliberalism and neoconservativism both, in practice, accept the status-quo organisation of human societies. Indeed some argue that the dominant force in the last thirty years is not neoliberalism but neoconservatism (Akram-Lodhi, 2006). In short, the marginally different grounds for supporting the status-quo act merely as a mask for this support. Both justify (neo)paternalist approaches (based on merit or inheritance) believing that those who engineer the retention of power are those, by their attributes, who are best fitted to do so without critical assessment of how their justification of extant power structures are based only on a verisimilitude of ability/understanding. Instead, the actual conditions for 'best fit' are social similarity to existing formations of power. Both rely on a justification of these existing formations as reflecting a 'common sense', that is an unalienable and unchallengeable, right (through merit or inheritance) to dominance. This Hydra-like theoretical intertwining, then, underpins the social policy changes which both cut back social safety nets and enforce the processes of marketization, self-economization and responsibilization (Akram-Lodhi, 2006; Brown, 2015) and which deny and dismiss the calls for change from those who are excluded by these processes.

Neoliberalism as Antagonistic Politics in the Academy and the 'fitting body'
It is not enough to simply name neoliberalism, or to map its development, to explain the problematics of neoliberalism in contemporary academia. The frequent trope of "It's neoliberalism, stupid" merely creates a fixity for neoliberalism which masks the power processes enacted through an internalised acceptance of the neoliberal-conservative-paternalist formulation or through explicit use of power. Yet for some parts of our academic and intellectual system, "It's neoliberalism, stupid" is the only response given when asking or being asked questions about outsourcing, redundancies, course closures, the narrowing down of focus through closure of departments and community activities and the dissection of Higher Education. More surprising is that this answer comes not only from those invested in *enacting* neoliberal managerialism but also from supposed critics of neoliberalism as explanations for the lack of challenge to these increasingly common experiences within higher education. Just as neoliberalism developed on the basis of existing conservative social formulations, then such answers re-inscribe these same social hierarchies in their assumed fixity and assume 'naturalness'.

We see this clearly, for example, in Eagleton's praise of 'democratic' collegial glory-days at Oxford colleges:

> Today, Oxbridge retains much of its collegial ethos. It is the dons who decide how to invest the college's money, what flowers to plant in their gardens, whose portraits to hang in the senior common room, and how best to explain to their students why they spend more on the wine cellar than on the college library. All important decisions are made by the fellows of the college in full session, and everything from financial and academic affairs to routine administration is conducted by elected committees of academics responsible to the body of fellows as a whole. In recent years, this admirable system of self-government has had to confront a number of centralizing challenges from the university […]; but by and large it has stood firm. Precisely because Oxbridge colleges are for the most part premodern institutions, they have a smallness of scale about them that can serve as a model of decentralized democracy, and this despite the odious privileges they continue to enjoy. (Eagleton, 2015)

What Eagleton omits from his nostalgic description of the "pre-modern" college ideal as resistant to an encroaching neoliberal centralised University, is that the former is overwhelmingly populated by white, middle-class, not disabled, performatively heterosexual male actors[4]. Therefore in using the College structure as the model of resistance to the neoliberal order, Eagleton makes no claim that the alternative should divest itself of this conservative social hierarchy - it is easy to envisage a privileged, homogeneous and largely self-replicating institution as a form of "decentralized democracy" precisely because differences will tend to be of an intellectual order (or indeed as Eagleton suggests here about investment, flowers, portraiture and wine purchases) rather than directly addressing issues of "Othering", exclusion and injustice. This example is neoliberalism-in-miniature, whereby neoliberalism is a form of antagonistic politics which relies on eradication of difference from the expected and idealised "fitting body" within its institutions – here the College institution shares far more with the neoliberal University rather than being any bastion of resistance to it. More concerningly, those who claim to oppose neoliberalism appear to accept the same conservative, paternalist foundation for any challenge to it.

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4 It is very difficult to get information about the make-up of Fellows in Oxford and Cambridge colleges but the Public Equality Duty does, at least, put pressure on HE institutions to publish some information about protected categories. From this we know that in 2015/16 academic staff at Oxford were 78% male, 93% white and 97% not disabled. We cannot tell anything about sexual orientation as Oxford only monitors this for applications and not existing staff. For Cambridge the reported figures are 58.7% male, 90.5% white and disability and sexuality are not monitored by job type (academic, facilities etc.). Cambridge also measures University committee (but not College) membership by gender which shows a male predominance ranging from 95% (Chairs of Faculty Boards) to 54% (Council). (*University of Oxford,* 2017; *University of Cambridge,* 2017)

Within the wider academy, the neoliberal framework means that achieving a position of power is largely the end product of a process of conformity and collusion with prevailing neoliberal, neopaternalist, patriarchal, white-privileged, abled-bodied heteronormative privileges. As previously noted, we cannot disentwine these systems from each other but have to see them, as Patricia Hill Collins (1990) argues, as part of a matrix of domination. Reay (no date) points out that:

> The apprenticeship model within academia means that achieving a position of power as a woman [person of colour, disabled person etc.] is largely the end product of a process of conformity and collusion with, rather than challenge to, prevailing power dynamics which privilege men. Unsurprisingly, the discourses which interrogate white male hegemony are largely absent from the academy. But hidden male power is no less effective than easily observed acts of coercive power. It is the invisibility of hidden power that makes it so powerful.

This framework demands conformity in enough areas that a person can 'fit' into the space already allowed for its politics. In the academy, it's relatively easy for a white, heterosexual, middle-class, Western man who espouses 'radical' views to fit into the demanded shape but it's harder if the contortion/corners are on multiple matrix points – the person trying to fit is radical and/or a woman and/or non-white and/or not straight and/or not abled bodied then the contortion required is often too much to bear. As such neoliberalism does not just promote a "survival of the fittest" but acts as a regulatory provocation towards relative sameness[5].

To give some idea of how this operates in practice we could look at a myriad of examples: for example many institutions have met basic (physical) disability access requirements to the seating areas of their teaching spaces, but not to the presenting areas with steps, stages, lack of seating and daises all precluding easy disability access (Swain, 2016; Sang, 2017). Most internal staff meetings fail to meet even a basic standard of behaviour which allows hearing impaired colleagues or those with auditory sensory distortion to participate fully due to the number of overlapping conversations which take

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[5] There is much to be said about how neoliberalism across the education system prior to Higher Education level embeds this sameness in a way which enables HE institutions to disavow their role in the maintenance of this hegemony by convincing many that higher education is not a place they would comfortably fit therefore responsilibizing such individuals for not applying in the first place. This is as true for research degrees and job applications as it is for students' choices and we see the impact of this in the increasingly concentrations of white, male, heterosexual and abled-bodied post holders as one ascends both career structures and the dreaded League Tables.

place, let alone if a colleague had Executive Dysfunction, were Neurodiverse or needed trauma-informed contexts.

Similarly, there are multiple cases where these systems of power and disciplinary responses are being enacted, but where the story is queered enough (by gender, race, sexuality, disability and so forth) to render it "untellable" (Coates, 2000) in popular and higher education discourses and the media. A single example from many is the controversy over Bahar Mustafa's position as Welfare and Diversity Officer at Goldsmiths College in 2015. In February 2015, Mustafa organised a BME social before the screening of the dark comedy *Dear White People* (2014) about racism on US college campuses – an event picked up by *The Spectator* blog, a bastion of conservativism, and described as "racial segregation in a British university" (Prendergast, 2015). In April 2015 Mustafa organised another event for BME women and non-binary people and on the Facebook page invite asked that white-cis men did not attend. The story was again picked up and amplified via a range of conservative sources and Mustafa was pilloried – precisely for trying to create a space in which counterinstitutional voices had priority. Mustafa then tweeted a picture of herself next to hand-drawn A4 poster saying "No white cis-men pls [sic]" with a picture of a mug labelled "male tears" (Batchelor, 2015; *The Telegraph,* 2015 both reproduce the picture) and the campaign against her intensified. . When she tweeted with "#killallwhitemen" (an ironic rejoinder to the #notallmen campaign which seeks to challenge the idea that misogyny exists because not all men commit misogynistic acts) the negative coverage was immense and resulted in complaints to the Police and Mustafa being arrested and charged with sending a racially motivated malicious communication (Batchelor, 2015; *The Telegraph,* 2015) – charges later dropped for lack of evidence (Elgot; 2015).This demonstrate a retrenchment of white, male power through measures supposedly designed to protect "Others". Goldsmiths College institutionally disavowed her actions by writing to the Student's Union promulgating claims that creating such spaces was racist and *The Spectator* ridiculed Mustafa as "a foul cretin"; "an ass, a halfwit" and "the silly cow" and her supporters as "personification of the abject stupidity which reigns within our universities" (Liddle, 2015). Describing the Mustafa controversy as "untellable" refers not to the narrative of the neoliberal-neopaternalist-conservative media claiming its freedom to insult Mustafa and Higher Education in general but to the untellability of the story behind Mustafa's actions – the sexism, racism, disabilism and heternonormativity of contemporary Universities. As Brinkhurst-Cliffe (2015) pointed out "it can be safely said that no white men ever felt threatened by Mustafa's

hashtag, or were ever really afraid she was inciting white male genocide" because, in the neoliberal-conservative nexus, white men have safely retained their position at the apex of power relations. However, in the media discourse, Mustafa's actions are presented as coming about spontaneously, without antecedents, rather than as embedded responses to a series of provocations which, themselves, are responded to in neoliberal-conservative terms as requiring greater 'resilience' or responsibilization. It also demonstrates how antagonistic responses to counterinstitutional actions open up spaces to be reinhabited by neoliberal-conservative ideal individuals, in this case some students and commentators drawing on neoliberal discourses of freedom, free speech and political correctness gone mad to antagnonistic relations which are designed as protections for existing power relations.

This re-taking of spaces by neoliberal-neoconservative privileged bodies and voices is also seen in many of the discourses surrounding course closures in which affected staff and students are 'responsibilized' for their inability to be flexible about their work or study base and their inability to recover from the shock of closure announcements. We also see a congratulatory linkages of this white, male, performatively heterosexual, ableist hegemony in public discourses, particularly around courses which have constantly challenged or problematized the Higher Education sector, such as the case of Women's Studies course closures. In one example the (white, abled-bodied, performatively heterosexual and mostly male) management welcomed tweets such as this from supremely conservative quarters:

in response to mostly black, queer and/or disabled part-time students who were trying to resist the announced closure (part way through) of their MA Women's Studies course. The mostly white, straight and not-disabled management took tweets like this as examples of public support for their decision to disenfranchise part-time students from being able to continue their studies as a coherent cohort and argued that the complaints were signs that the Course (staff) had failed to equip students with the resilience to manage the transition after it had been announced.

The notion of being inadequately resilient to the actions of neo-liberal-conservative frameworks is an example *par excellence* of how the responsibilization of the self operates and demonstrates the neoliberal-neoconservative nexus as it clearly raises the neoconservative conception of "character" into neoliberal discourse (Apple, 2006). As Joseph (2013) notes "the recent enthusiasm for the concept of resilience across a range of policy literature is the consequence of its fit with neoliberal discourse" (p.38). But the notion of 'resilience' within Higher Education is not just proposed through policy but enacted through (sometimes mandatory) training for academic staff and included as a desired graduate attribute. Whereas resilience in an ecological or engineering context refers to the ability for systems to bounce back from shocks, in neoliberal terms it is the individual, not the community or system which must enable this (Hall & Lamont, 2013) and create protective factors from future shocks, in Joseph's (2013) terms "in order to survive the uncertainties of complex systems, people have to show their own initiative as active and reflexive agents capable of adaptive behaviour" (p.39). As Rivers and Webster (2017) have pointed out, this 'resilience response' is deeply neobliberal in how "the language of 'resilience', 'grit; and the insidious 'Growth Mindset' flatten out the complexities of success or failure as well as the apparently personal attributes that influence either outcome". Yet, "at times, academic and student distress has been explained away as the consequence of a scholarly vocation that adapts poorly to the realities of marketization" (Hall 2017) and the individual becomes responsibilized for managing the uncertainty and unpredictability which neoliberalism is based upon and indeed such 'creativity' of approach becomes an inherent part of responsibilization itself (O'Malley, 2010). Obviously those best able to do this are those who already hold most resource (*capitals*) and power to smooth such systemic uncertainties, this is true in Higher Education choices as elsewhere, – that is white, not disabled, performatively heterosexual men who experience life set on difficulty level 'Low' (Scalzi 2012). This pattern is replicated in students attending these different kinds of Universities too, as Canaan and Shumar (2008 p.7) note "Students with great cultural capital and greater social capital may very well be better able to negotiate the marketized system and "buy" credentials of higher social status and thereby become less commodified than students at less elite institutions. The latter, who are more likely to attend more "vulnerable institutions" and receive "an education that has been reduced to narrowly defined core competencies which have been legitimated on the bandwagon of consumer choice" (Naidoo and Jamison 2005)". As Galvin, Berg and Teele (2017) outline, this, 'resilience response' "encourages

individualization, naturalizes and depoliticizes social structures, positions insecurity to be normal and even expected and places additional demands on women and people of colour".

We also now see staff in higher education – mostly those already "Othered" by higher education institutions - becoming responsibilized for the mental health of students as a measure of their performance, "The #stepchange policy framework of UniversitiesUK discusses staff training in mental health literacy and health promotion, allocating time and resources to staff, aligning student and staff mental health, and crucially building "mental health – and health – *into staff performance*" (Hall 2017). That is, rather than addressing and changing the neoliberal structures which detrimentally impact staff and student wellbeing, Universities are responding by making resisting those impacts, and enabling others to resist them, a measure of success. This is hugely detrimental in that it ignores the impacts of systemic disadvantage, makingthose without resources like time[6] (or solutions) responsible for ensuring others do not complain (which is a key marker of resilience when all is said and done) and demands even greater input of emotional labour.

Therefore, neoliberal practices retrench and re-embed neoconservative versions of stratification which demands more of those still actively positioned as "Other" (such as greater coping mechanisms, time, personal management strategies, attitudes of forgiveness etc.) within the system. As noted above, the neoliberal-neoconservative academic system relies on a myth of meritocracy in which it is assumed that higher education is really "a competition in which there are clear winners and losers, but in which the resulting inequalities are justified on the basis that participants have an equal opportunity to prove themselves" (Miller, 1999 in Reay, 2014). This myth of academia is used pragmatically to explain away the negative realities of the academic role (see for example Gill, 2009), to stigmatise those who do not survive, succeed or pursue a traditional academic career and to excuse socio-inequalities in Higher Education including presenting disenfranchisement as a lack of entrepreneurship, resilience, economicisation and responsibilisation. Although it is possible to exist within the neoliberal Higher Education sector and still be subject to these "Othering" power relations this is only managed by significant contortions with personal impacts as noted above. Whilst things (may) have moved on from this discussion in Reay (2014):

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[6] Whilst the UUK documents advocates for giving time, anyone working in Higher Education knows there is a big difference between hours allocated in workload modelling and real hours being given at the time to a student or colleague is in crisis.

> Tutor 2: I can't understand all the fuss about working class applicants it's the lower middles we should be concerned about, they are being denied entry – what used to be our bright grammar school boys, we just aren't getting enough of them. The working classes aren't interested in coming here it is outside their world
> Diane : What do you mean outside their world?
> Tutor 2: Well by definition they are interested in things of the hand and body rather than the intellect, Cambridge is off their radar (Reay, 2014)

Or indeed my own experience of returning to my former secondary school and talking to the teacher who had been my Head of Year.

> She immediately congratulated me on having done so well to have got so far as doing a PGCE – she honestly meant the congratulations at the same time she remarked that she was talking to someone who had been in the top 1% of that year's cohort (something I didn't know). When I gently informed her I wasn't there as a student teacher, she was unable to think of an alternate explanation for my presence. When I explained I was conducting research for a higher degree, she was silent until she asked me why I would turn down the solid work of secondary school teaching for the pursuit of higher knowledge and research. (Livesey, 2015 p.1)

The experience of being a working class, queer, disabled woman (accidentally) in Higher Education (as I am, or indeed being working class or queer or disabled or black etc. or any combination of these) is one of experiencing the pressure of these "Othering" power relations. hooks (2000) notes that there is a stark choice for those who inhabit the intersections of being women, working-class, non-heterosexual, person of colour or having disabilities:

> Slowly I began to understand fully that there was no place in academe for folks from working class backgrounds who did not wish to leave the past behind. That was the price of the ticket. Poor students would be welcome at the best institutions of higher learning only if they were willing to surrender memory, to forget the past and claim the assimilated present as the only worthwhile and meaningful reality (hooks 2000 p.36)

So those of us who are "Othered" in the academy are actually being asked to remake ourselves to fit the ideal body for which the institution was designed. This is done by being asked to at least try, as much as possible, to forget or deny those things which make us different – our class background, our race, our disabilities, our caring responsibilities, our gendered corporeal selves and our very modes of being. As Reay (no date) has written

> working class women like myself who grew up with very different cultural values to those of the academy - cultures in which straight talking is valued [and] the exigencies of daily life leave little space for either flattery or conceit - find academia an alien and confusing space […] She [the working class woman] is positioned in an untenable space on the boundaries of two

> irreconcilable ways of being and has to produce an enormous body of psychic, intellectual and interactive work in order to maintain her contradictory ways of being

These demands placed on us are the price we pay for trying to remain within Higher Education institutions but should not be seen as the price of entry to an institution (i.e. something which can be parted with to gain something in return) but more as the price we are made to pay for misadventuring beyond the limits set and consistently supported by the neoliberal-neoconservative nexus.

Moreover the meritocratic, equal opportunities myth which is underpinned by paying this intensional price, is used as a direct instrument of extensional neoliberal governmentality in such exercises as Research Excellence Frameworks, targets and increasing allocations of responsibilities based on bureaucratic calculations in which failure to succeed is repackaged as individual failure to maximise ones economized self as a saleable object or accept individual responsibilization. This falls under neoliberal:

> management techniques (evaluation, projects, standardization of procedures, decentralization) [which] are supposed to make it possible to objectify the individual's conformity to the behaviour norm expected of him [sic], to evaluate his subjective involvement by means of grids and other recording instruments on the manager's 'control panel', on pain of penalization in his job, wage and career prospects (Dardot & Lavel, 2013, p.263)

Such a clash between the extensional and intensional conditions means that those who do not fit into (White, male, heteronormative, abled-bodied) higher education spaces "stick out [… which] can mean to become a sore point, or even to experience oneself as being a sore point" (Ahmed 2012 p.41) and to experience being made sore oneself by the constant abrasion which wears away and is difficult to avoid the impacts. This is because neoliberalism is an antagonistic mode of thought and politics despite presenting itself as having purged antagonism from the arbitrary hierarchies it maintains (Žižek, 1989; 1999). Chantal Mouffe (2013) describes the linguistic trick by which neoliberalism maintains this fantasy, what we might otherwise "call an 'adversary' is merely a 'competitor'" (p.8) and by envisaging:

> the field of politics as a neutral terrain in which different groups compete to occupy the positions of power, their objective being to dislodge others in order to occupy their place, without putting into question the dominant hegemony and profoundly transforming the relations of power. (2013, p.8)

In other words, neoliberalism relies on what Hemmings has called a "rhetorical invocation of unity" (Hemmings, 2002, p.170) where such unity clearly does not exist. But this rhetorical invocation is used consistently and antagonistically to eradicate (and erode) all other viewpoints, and discipline those who hold them into the conformity of a 'responsibilized' self. Thus the aim of neoliberalism is not to maintain hegemonic supremacy by convincing us of its rightness but rather to maintain its hegemonic position by making it impossible to think any other way, to eradicate all critique and dissent. In the case of Higher Education, the expansion of student places (which had the potential to democratise higher education) has meant a widening of the audience disciplined into such thinking by increasing the exposure to neoliberalist ideologies. By critiquing neoliberalism, for example by pointing out how the terrain is not neutral but is rather gendered, racialized, embodied etc., one becomes cast not as an adversary with an acceptance of the righteousness of being able to contest arguments, but rather one becomes interpellated as competitor which must be eradicated both extensionally (by removing such contest from spaces for example through course closure, redundancy, disciplinary procedures etc.) and intensionally, by convincing us to reform our thinking. In this sense 'responsibilization' is little more than making it impossible to operate in any mode other than co-operation because failure to do so becomes an individual failure (rather than a systemic issue) and the response to this is increased responsibilization.

Of course, critique does have the ability to challenge neoliberal hegemony (it is not the case that we can (or should) shrug and claim "It's neoliberalism, stupid!"; see also Springer 2016) and there is a fragility to the practice of this antagonistic politics as recent cases have shown. For example, Professor Thomas Docherty, critic of the neoliberalisation of Universities, was disciplined by the University of Warwick for sighing, making 'ironic' comments and giving off 'negative body language' which was said to undermine the authority of his, then, Head of Department (Gardner 2014; Grogan 2015). Failure to impose intensional changes on/in Docherty (in that he refused to change his belief that his behaviour was justified and appropriate) led to extensional power being used and Docherty was suspended ostensibly for his body language and demeanour but in actuality for the use of body language and demeanour as part of his critique of the neoliberalisation of his home University. Docherty was in reality being accused of having failed to embed and express appropriate mirroring of the neoliberal-conservative value nexus determined by the use of 'soft' culturally-normative power through surveillance of demeanour, body language and facial expressions. The response to this

failure of responsibilization was the utilisation of the most extreme disciplinary power available against *homo oeconomicus*, the deprivation of meaning through employment and waged labour.

The impact of neoliberalism and the price we pay

As neoliberal institutions are built around presumptions about the bodies who will inhabit them (and the use of those bodies) which responsibilizes individuals by turning around justified complaints to become discourses of "not fitting in" (Ahmed, 2012) and lacking resilience as we have seen. Part of the extensionality of neoliberalism is the linking together of institutions via an ideological network which shares a point of view on the right shape that complaints and complainants should take. White men, like Docherty (above), being victimised for speaking against marketization are the right shape for stories about valiant complaints and complainants against neoliberalism. But women, people of colour, queers and those with disabilities are invariably the wrong shape as Sara Ahmed (2012; 2016; see also Pells, 2016) has aptly written about and as the example of Harris Manchester College, Oxford issuing a warning to students to be vigilant and "alert a member of staff" after CCTV showed Femi Nylander, a black graduate, in the College grounds after dark (Turner & Asl, 2017). In this neoliberal system the 'failures' of women, people of colour, queers and those with disabilities to "progress" (a word beloved of neoliberalism and all theories wedded to white western Anglo-centric modernity) at the same rate as those who "fit" is re-presented as an individualised failure to fully realise the economization of the self (Brown, 2015) and to "take advantage" and "make the most" of their economizable attributes.

As subjects under neoliberalism we often come to adopt forms of ontological and self-actualising neoliberal thinking, not naively, but through their sheer ubiquity. As Shore (2010) notes "while staff do not necessarily internalise that image of themselves the effect of constant scrutiny and surveillance (as Foucault demonstrated) profoundly influences an academic's sense of self" (Shore, 2010, p.27). These neoliberal transformations of the self are rarely enacted through coercive control (except in states of 'failure' as the Docherty case exemplifies) but rather, through a Foucauldian understanding of power in that we internalise this reconfiguration of the self and perpetuate it in our everyday practices; surveilling both ourselves and others. As Canaan has argued that "academics have little alternative but to be at least partly compliant with the new order now structuring HE"

(Canaan, 2014, p.55). We, therefore, (are made to) remake our neoliberal subjectivity everyday and recast it in terms of choice, freedom, the need to increase our social or academic capital, economic or working portfolio or the need to leverage our resources (by which we mean skills, characteristics or abilities) for our own advancement. As Foucault (2004) identified part of this submission includes the internalisation of such power through self-surveilling strategies (time management, research output plans etc.). We are compelled to write about ourselves in neoliberal, 'responsibilized', marketised terms on job applications and appraisal documents and we are made to advise students to do the same. In this latter action we become the conduits from the continued reproduction of neoliberalism. When, even as critics of neoliberalism, we are made to instil it in our students or at minimum tacitly support it as a framework for students' self-development and self-identity (as through so many University "career planning/building" and "enhancement" activities") then it becomes clear that any part of operation within higher education requires submission to neoliberal orthodoxies.

This incessant replication of neoliberal ideology, which has been much explored before, is reliant on the conservative, neopaternalist agenda inherent within neoliberalism, as explored above. The inculcation of higher education students and staff into neoliberal discourses provides new opportunities to embed a conservative status quo masked as meritocratic. Indeed we see this clearly if we look at the gender or race differences in employment figures within higher education (*HESA,* 2017). The impact of this conservative status quo is backed by a number of studies including Grummell *et al* (2009) who posit that the increasing female relegation to the lower - and more precarious - levels of higher education employment should not be surprising given the division of emotional labour demanded in the split between teaching and managing, where managers are seen as "care-less" workers within higher education and lower grade workers (where more women are present) as 'care-full' (it is worth thinking about this in terms of the Universities UK announcements of mental health #stepchange) (UUK no date)). The gendered division of emotional labour within higher education is used as both explanation of gendered patterns of employment and as a mode of replicating these gendered divisions. Indeed, within the neoliberal-conservative nexus of higher education an implicit and idealised "male-ness" has

> exacerbated a number of aspects disadvantageous to women. In the first place, they have tended to promote a masculinised culture extolling values and practices such as highly competitive, rather than collegial, reward-oriented striving [...] The 'bottom-line' imperative

has also resulted in a proliferation of casual and fixed-term employment arrangements – with women predominating among those employed on that basis (Wilson *et al.,* 2010, p.538)

And as Diane Reay reminds us, there are **"**repercussions of an elitist and masculinised academy for, in particular, women and academics from working class and ethnic minority backgrounds, and consequences for academic identities in neoliberal new managerialist practices." (Reay, no date). This neoliberal idea of the rational, utilitarian, economized self is not, as neoliberal-conservative discourse likes to present it, an atomized individual divorced from other social processes and connections rather than as a gendered, racialized, heterosexually disciplined, embodied neoliberal subject within deeply conservative power structures. Thus the queer, disabled woman is expected to exploit economizable capitals (including, according to Catherine Hakim (2011) her erotic capital) whilst fitting into institutions designed to fit around white, male, heterosexual, abled bodied and middle class existences. The queer, disabled woman is then disciplined and responsibilized so that her failure is recast as being constituted by a lack of resilience and an inability to have an economizable regulated and predictable body[7] in terms of both erotic and productive labour; by choosing not to enact heteropatriarchal sexual identities (and indeed often challenging that by being public about her queerness and her disinterest in heterosexualised practices including sexual advances) and being subject to conservative social practices which mean she is not a disengaged, individual but tied into reproductive and emotional labour in both her work and her non-work existence. In short the queered position of the non-fitting subject means she also expends more energy and time on managing the "bad fit" (what is really meant by resilience) including deflecting institutional hetero-sexualised practices, managing negative feedback relating to her bodily difference and working harder within institutionalised gendered divisions of labour and expectations of behaviour and attributes (Boring et al., 2016; Wagner et al., 2016; Mengel et al., 2016; MacNell et al., 2015; Reid, 2010; Centra, 2000; Basow, 1995). Effectively her very presence, degraded and exhausted as it is, is a critique of neoliberal- conservative formations of institutions and yet it is also made invisible by the same institutions.

Resisting Neoliberal-Conservative Higher Education

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[7] In which I also include functioning of the mind in so much as it can impact the performative aspects of existence.

I want to conclude with some ideas about how we can resist neoliberal-conservative higher education framework. Inevitably, challenging this comes with risk precisely because of its inherent antagonism and the power it holds, both hegemonic and practical, which regulate the lives we lead within (and increasingly outside) the institutions. This is part of the price we pay under neoliberalism in higher education.

Mouffe's solution to the inherent antagonism of neoliberalism is to create spaces and institutions which are agonistic and enable a pluralistic diversity of voices because it seeks not to eliminate dissent (as neoliberalism does) but to win hegemonic supremacy against worthy adversaries. Agonism, in this sense, is about reformulating institutions to operate from a stance which does not privilege a particular formulation of rightness as inevitable, natural or normative. Challenging neoliberalism's antagonism, whilst inhabiting a neoliberal system, can only be done by rejecting as the benchmark of success whether or not we displace antagonism, but rather whether we create meaningful change in our collective lives and our ability to sustain ourselves. We must create spaces and counterinstitutional narratives which acknowledge the matrix of domination (Hill Collins, 1990) or what has commonly become known as intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991).

Counterinstitutional narratives only come about through conscious action creating platforms for voices and bodies who do not (and refuse to) fit. This moves the notion of tellability, queering platforms away from the expected, idealised institutional figure. This involves those with privileges setting them aside to consciously create explicitly agonistic spaces, relationships and links needed to maintain and embed a diversity of voices in communities, groups and organisations. Burawoy's (2004) notion of 'public sociology' goes some way to this end but still relies on the idea of the academic-as-(public)-expert rather than on plural counterinstitutional voices. Combining Burawoy with Milojević's (1998) idea of multiversities may come closer to Mouffe's (2013) idea of agonistic institutions which build themselves around exchanges and differences. However the creation of agonistic spaces within the neoliberal university is fraught with contradiction because our relations with students and colleagues are inherently regulated by antagonistic practices such as benchmarking, grading and metrics.

This can only be achieved by collectivising actions starting at grassroots level to build supportive, agonistic spaces in which we can both do and reflect on our work. This would help ensure the inhabitability of higher education by queer and queering subjects by sustaining them/us and protect them/us from the affective and practical demands of the 'fancy footwork'[8] needed to avoid substantial harm from the soreness of not fitting. Collectivised grassroots action also critiques and challenges the inevitability myth of neoliberal-conservative higher education. Creating these agonistic spaces involves resistance through our everyday practice such as challenging our own slips into neoliberal and antagonistic language because language has power, and challenging colleagues when they utilise the same discourse. Instead, we need to create actively different spaces, language and thinking which begin social transformation by being able to "resist inequalities, acknowledge complicities, and foster collegialities […] Collaboratively exploring and experimenting with alternative practices is similarly necessary if we are to find new ways of *un*disciplining the subject of higher education in present times" (Saltmarsh, 2011, p.134-5).

In this collectivised action, those who are critical of the current system and hold the most institutionalised power need to shoulder more of the burden of challenging and resisting (Brecher, 2015). It cannot (and should not) be left to the precariously employed, younger and more often female, people of colour or disabled staff to carry out such resistance (at least not alone) because the proportion of damage to them of such actions is much greater than the proportion of damage to the career of a white, male, permanently employed professor. Those who are in permanent employment in established and historic institutions should carry more of the burden than those in precarious institutions facing demographic, financial and funding crisis (and who, not surprisingly also employ proportionally more women, people of colour and disabled people). The current reliance on the staff who are most affected to carry a movement recreates the same system that Ahmed (2012) highlights where the neoliberal-conservative system relies on it being small numbers of those most affected who become tied into challenging a particular thing, whether it be racism, sexism, homophobia and heteronormativity or neoliberalism. This both institutionally privatises the issues to that group and places a burden upon them to be the ones to solve the situation whilst also shouldering the burden of being the ones who are naming and experiencing the problems.

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